



By Denise King Gillingham, MSW, CPCC

Resolutions: Not Just for the New Year

Take advantage of the sunny summer season to set goals.



The confetti and champagne of New Year's celebrations are long gone, but there's still time to make resolutions. Traditionally, we make resolutions around the beginning of the calendar year, at the tail end of the busy and often emotionally challenging holiday season. All of the activity—and the associated external pressures—can make it difficult to focus on sound changes that realistically honor our desires to enrich and evolve our lives. As an alternative consider transforming your resolution calendar and making the summer season your period for reflection and renewal. Summer, with its more relaxed pace, can be a perfect time to create thoughtful, healthy resolutions that could make this year your best yet.

So, let's get started creating powerful life changes. Here are five steps to help you make resolutions that will lead you toward a better year.

1. Ask the big question: What do you want your life to look like?

Go ahead—think big! Paint a picture for yourself of your big life. Who are you? What do you do? Remember, you can have, do, and be anything you want so long as you have the right tools: a positive attitude and a commitment to planning and goal setting.

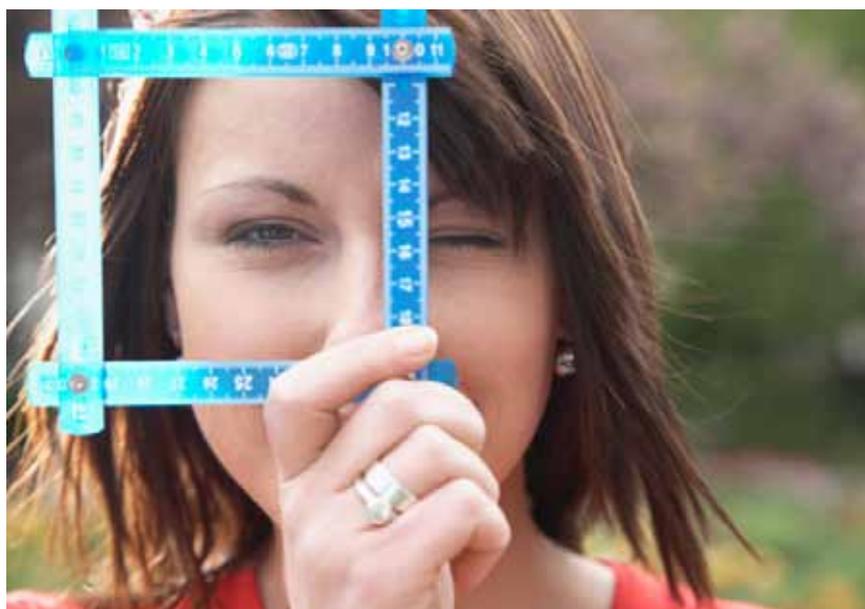
Perhaps you have decided that you want to be an artist, or you imagine yourself living in a different place; maybe you picture

yourself as a pet owner. The possibilities are endless, and you are limited only by your beliefs. As you engage in this exercise, put these limits aside for a moment and allow your creativity and imagination to take over. When you do, you will be freer to think about bigger possibilities. Write down your ideas. Be as specific as possible.

2. Break it down.

When you have some ideas about how you want to change your life, the next step is figuring out how to work with these big ideas. As a first step, break down the ideas into categories, such as home, career, exercise, and spiritual.

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3. Get busy.

Implementing your ideas is the next step. Perhaps you want to move into a new home but you feel that it is not possible at this time. Instead of dismissing the idea altogether, think about what you can change in your current home environment to satisfy your desire for change. For example, try rearranging furniture or painting a room to transform your living space into something that more closely resembles your ideal home.

If your goal or idea is more complicated, more planning is probably required. For example, if you want a career change, you might have to do it little by little in small, manageable steps. First explore the profession you're interested in: research necessary qualifications, seek out informational interviews, read trade journals, and speak with others in the field to learn about various career paths. Now, using this information, write down five small steps you can take toward each of your goals. Perhaps it starts with taking a class.

4. Seek out support.

Think about creating resolutions with a buddy. People have running and workout partners, so why not a resolution buddy? You will have built-in accountability, which will motivate you and will make achieving your goals easier.

5. Celebrate!

Celebrate every small accomplishment as you write them down. When you have a challenging day, you can look back at how much progress you have made. Each accomplishment is a step on the way to your big goal. When you string the small steps together, you will see that you have made headway toward your big goal.

No need to wait for 2012—you have the power to make this your best year yet. Celebrate your life and your power today! ✨

Denise King Gillingham, MSW, CPCC, is a certified co-active coach who specializes in helping people achieve enduring life change through accessing their inner wisdom. Her international practice includes clients from all walks of life. Denise received her master's degree in social work from Columbia University and has been a mental health professional for more than 15 years. She shifted her focus from therapy to coaching in 2006. Her professional experience includes private therapy practice in Prague, Czech Republic; crisis intervention with New York University; in-patient therapy at Payne Whitney Clinic in New York City; and substance abuse counseling at Bronx VA Medical Center in New York City. She develops and conducts workshops on emotional intelligence for organizations in the United States and Europe. Contact Denise at dkgcoach@gmail.com.