



# Eight Principles to Succeeding in Your New Year's Resolution

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Nine in ten people make a New Year's resolution, and yet only one in nine keeps it. Why is it so hard for people to improve themselves?

As an executive coach, I find that even the smallest of changes are not to be underestimated. Making and sustaining change doesn't come easy. Contrary to what some say, improving yourself is not just a matter of wanting something bad enough or trying harder.

Whether improving your skills, fitness, relationships, or stopping a bad habit, change requires particular attention in two areas - developing the right mindset and creating the ability to resist your built-in resistance. University of Scranton psychology professor John Norcross conducted a study of New Year's resolution makers. He found having the right mindset to be the more important of the two and the best predictor of long term success. In other words, the particular course, book, diet, instructor, technique, or approach you use isn't as important as your mental readiness to change.

There are eight principles that enable you to develop the mindset and ability to change. They will make achieving your goals in the coming year a straightforward process.

1. **Awareness** - Get beyond your symptoms and uncover the root of that which has prevented you from achieving your objective before. Move past your self-deceptions, biases, and blind-spots by seeking feedback from others and building your self-awareness. Become accurately aware of what it is you need to do in order to reach your goal.
2. **Motivation** - Build an unyielding internal motivation to change. Convert your broad desires or external incentives into specific benefits that have real and near-term meaning to you.
3. **Belief** - Remove any doubt that you can achieve your goal. Study past failed attempts for lessons learned. Visualize yourself succeeding. Plan around your anticipated obstacles and have contingency plans in place that can be easily deployed.
4. **Incremental Steps** - Analyze approaches to reaching your goal and select the best approach available. Devise a plan of action using small steps that circumvent your brain's built-in resistance to change. Embed elements of fun to make your actions something you look forward to. Create realistic milestones by which you can measure progress.
5. **Time & Energy** - Determine how much time and energy your plan will require. Determine how you will free up that time and energy to make certain the top excuses to change, "I don't have the time" and "I'm just too tired" are not your excuses.
6. **Initiation** - Ensure the circumstances are optimal when starting your self-improvement journey. Don't start a diet just before going on a family vacation. Don't sign-up for night classes when a large and time sensitive project kicks-off at work. Don't practice your new sales presentation for the first time on your top account.
7. **Others** - Solicit the help of others. Build your own support group. Find people that will offer you wise counsel, hold you accountable, and celebrate milestone achievements with you. Leverage the resources at your disposal.
8. **Normalcy** - Follow your plan. Stay focused. Take it one day at a time. Apply your new behavior every day. Don't let a bubble of activity or special circumstance prevent you from following your plan. Apply yourself until your new behavior becomes as unconscious as brushing your teeth with your dominate hand.

Follow these eight principles to coaching yourself and your AMBITION will quickly become your reality.

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