

Pediatric Corner

By Dr. Michael Anderson, MD
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Resolution realism: Starting your New Year with realistic goals.

All of us know that January is not just the start of a new calendar, but also the month is when we must begin yet again another cycle of improvement through the New Year's resolution process. We all know the drill. Set worthy goals... eat better, exercise more, spend more time with the kids. Don't abandon the goals at least until the warmer spring weather will compensate for the guilt. Holding fast to our resolutions and making the change is truly difficult. I have found the following rules as helpful steps to improve the resolution process.

Be realistic. While a new year is a perfect time to consider adjustments in our life, unrealistic plans will lead to discouragement. Set a goal that can be met with only a small amount of endurance. The right goal is the most important first step.

Be Modest. Don't be greedy and try to change too much at once. An overhaul of your diet, train for a marathon, and quit smoking all at once is too much stress for you ... not to mention anybody who has to put up with you. Please, for all of our sakes, pick just one realistic goal at a time to work with.

Be Original. Make your own resolutions. They should be something you want to do for your own reasons, not for your spouse, friends, family, or even forbid, your doctor.

Be Social. Get others involved. In some circles it is called an accountability partner. In any event it makes it harder to give up if somebody else knows. Success will increase if you include your friends and family in your goals.

Be Journalistic. Write down your resolution and keep a written record of your progress no matter how small. Write down, in the beginning, exactly what you want to achieve in one month, three, and six. At six months, reassess your written progress. Without a record you have less sense of accomplishment and thus less motivation to "*keep on keepin' on.*"

Be Forgiving. When you get off track, and everybody does, don't give up. Look over your written plan and make adjustments, and start anew.

Be Celebratory. Reward yourself for your accomplishments that are consistent you're your goal. (On a diet? New clothes rather than extra deserts are the appropriate rewards).

PULL QUOTE: Armed with the above proven plan you are now ready for a "new" resolution process this year. With that, the Anderson family wishes you and yours the best success in 2007 for the Happiest, Healthiest New Year ever.

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