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# New Year's Resolutions

Special advertising feature of the Duluth News Tribune

## Be successful with your New Year's Resolutions

**(ARA)** About half of us will make some type of New Year's resolution this year. And sadly, statistics suggest that about a third of those resolutions will be dropped within the first week. Less than a quarter of our New Year's resolutions will be realized before mid-year.

But, some research implies that making a New Year's resolution does increase the chance of actually achieving that goal, so why not give it a shot?

"I'm going to lose 50 pounds. I'm going to save more money. I'm going to spend more time with my spouse and children. I'm going to complete my education."

These are just some of the typical New Year's resolutions that many people pledge at the start of a new year.

Or, with the economy struggling and many Americans adjusting the way they spend this year may be the time to resolve to do some financial planning by organizing your—budget, estate, savings and taxes.

How long a New Year's resolution lasts can depend on the nature of the resolution, how you prepare and your state of mind for accomplishing it. New Year's resolutions can be a good time to start new initiatives and personal improvement projects. Beyond simply setting the goals, there are many ways you can keep your goals alive throughout the entire year and improve your overall well-being.

Dr. Jim Wasner, associate professor of clinical psychology and program chair at Argosy University, Schaumburg suggests viewing resolutions in the larger context of personal growth and goal setting. "Think of resolutions as a reminder of the larger goals and plans you have for your life. These life changes should be planned carefully with both long-range dreams and desires and short-term actions on how to get there. Just because you have difficulty in achieving a short-

term objective doesn't mean you have to give up your aspirations. You may just need to revise your actions and fine tune your solutions," he says.

Here are some suggestions to consider when making New Year's resolutions:

- Select fewer resolutions. Long lists of items that will result in drastic life changes can be overbearing and cause a landslide of overindulgence.

- Select resolutions that have a real chance of being accomplished.

- Ask family and friends to be supportive by providing gentle reminders and constant encouragement to help you keep the resolution.

- Create a plan that starts slow and eases you into a routine to help ensure your success. Create attainable benchmarks so you can track your progress.

- Do not beat up on yourself if you give in to temptation, but resolve to continue on at the next appropriate opportunity.

- Do not compete with others or become discouraged if they seem to be fulfilling

their resolutions. Instead, look at their accomplishments as an inspiration that you can do the same.

Wasner adds, "Life changes are an important part of our development as mature adults. Resolutions are a fun way to remind us that change is an important part of who we are as humans. Use them as an impetus to fine tune your plans and not as a weight to be shouldered."

New Year's resolutions should be fun and meaningful but not overbearing or burdensome. They should help you to look at areas of your life you want to change or improve in the upcoming year. Most important, do not become discouraged if you are not successful on the first try, but commit to starting over until you accomplish your goal. In the words of Dr. Wasner, "New Year's resolutions are not a short run but more like a marathon where you must pace yourself to reach success."

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