

How To Keep New Years Resolutions: 5 Goal Setting Tips

By Lyndsay Swinton

“What am I doing? Where am I going? There’s got to be more to life than this!....” New Years resolutions spring up from our attempts to answer such tricky questions.

I won’t pretend to know the answers, but I can share 5 goal setting tips on how to keep New Years resolutions. After all, the quickest New Years resolutions to be broken are usually quickly formed, poorly thought out goals.

Goal Setting Tip 1 - Once a year is enough, thanks!

It’s healthy to ask big questions about where your life is going, but ask them too often and you’ll end up in a bog of directionless despair. Take the pressure off, and only ask the big questions once, or at most, twice a year.

Goal Setting Tip 2 - 7 is the magic number

George Miller, a 1950’s psychologist, proposed that we can only deal with 7 bits of information at any one time. Any more information and we need to group things into more memorable, manageable chunks. So when you create your New Year master plan, keep goals down to a manageable number and group similar areas.

Goal Setting Tip 3 - I say tomayto, you say tomaato - let's call the whole thing off!

A common mistake when setting goals, is in-sufficient detail. This can cause problems when we need to articulate these goals to work mates, life partners or even to ourselves. As an example of why this is important when goal setting, think of a house.

I have a particular house in mind, which is probably entirely different to the house you’re picturing. Is your house made of brick or wood? How many rooms does your house have? Is your house full of people or are you the sole resident? Imagine the arguments if we had the joint goal of buying a house together!

Keep New Years resolutions by writing your goals in enough detail for everyone to understand and agree what’s meant. So if your goal is to buy a house, put some

flesh on the bones by saying your goal is to buy a 3 bedroom house, with garden, near work, for no more than 3 times your salary.

Goal Setting Tip 4 - Keep it real!

You are more likely to achieve realistic goals. That's not to say you can't shoot for the stars and pursue your dreams; break up your mega goal into smaller, more manageable mini goals, and you're more likely to achieve your dream.

Goal Setting Tip 5 - Fantastic fibbing

Here's an unusual game to play. Start a conversation with a friend, family member or hijack someone from the street. Tell them they are going to help get your life on track, and all they have to do is ask a few choice questions.

Start to tell them the story of, for example, your New Years resolution to find and start your dream job. Tell them what it's like in the studio or office, the people you work with and meet as part of your job, what your daily schedule looks like. Get them to ask you questions about how you got there e.g. how did you get the interview, who spotted your business card, etc.

This is where you will be put on the spot and have to come up with plausible answers. Aim to "keep it real" with your answers, e.g. don't rely on winning the lottery to fund your plans! Keep this conversation going as long as possible, with as much detail as you can muster.

This might sound like complete madness, telling fantastic fibs or untruths about how you achieved you New Years resolution. The truth is that the questions they ask will forge links in your mind, creating a map that make it easier for you to achieve your long term goal. Just make sure you write down the steps you took to achieve your goal!

Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail

I hope these 5 goal setting tips show you how to keep New Years resolutions and achieve your goals. Follow this link for a more detailed [goal setting guide](#), including examples and templates to ensure you achieve your goals.

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Owner, Management for the Rest of Us

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