Be S.M.A.R.T. about your goals in the new year

by Elizabeth Sindelar-Loy
January 7 2019 1:49 PM

The start of a new year inevitably means that a vast majority of us will have declared bold statements to loved ones or on social media before the clock struck midnight. In our pursuit of self-improvement, resolutions were made on December 31st that will hopefully lead to life altering changes in the coming year. As much as our desire for personal growth is valid, the fact of the matter is that declaring a resolution before Auld Lang Syne has played only sets us up for failure and self-loathing in 2019.

80 percent of those who make New Year's resolutions fail within 90 days.

According to Statist

ica's 2017 survey on U.S. New Year's resolutions, 53 percent of respondents wanted to save money while the other 45 percent wanted to lose weight or to get in shape. Although the yearning to be financially stable and healthier are both reasonably sound resolutions, knowing that over three-quarters of us will fail, what can we do to guarantee our success?

It's simple, don't set yourself up for failure by making a vague resolution. Instead focus on making **S.M.A.R.T.** goals that are *specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound*. Think of goals you want to achieve not as overall ideas but instead as doable tasks. *Example: "I will drink half my body weight in ounces of water per day" vs "I will drink more water"*.

There are millions of programs and apps out there that guarantee goal success, but the reality is that there is no one size fits all system to goal planning. So, **flexibility** is the **key** to the program you choose. Each of us is unique in our goals and therefore, those goals must be tailored to our individual values and purpose. Setting a lofty goal which in your gut you know is unattainable, just creates a recipe for frustration and disaster.

Plus, thanks to technology, the human attention span is at its lowest ever-a whopping eight seconds. **A goldfish has a better chance at staying focused than we do!** This is why setting goals as doable tasks need to be specific. Without defining the details, it's easy to lose focus and swim away.

Instead of using technology to distract us from our tasks, use it for accountability. Believe it or not, there are apps other than social media! They are designed to help you track and measure your progress. Otherwise, how will you know you achieved anything? Plus, apps can help you set a time frame that can be narrowed down to daily reminders throughout the day. Goals, even those narrowed down to doable tasks, won't be achieved without a deadline or timeframe.

Remember, whether financial or health goals, it's about changing daily habits and creating new ones. This can be a daunting reality, but acknowledging that growth develops from failure will keep you positive. If you remember any nugget from this article, please learn to admit that humans are imperfect, and that's a blessing. Make 2019 the year to acknowledge failure as a path to success and ultimately love yourself as a result.