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How are those New Year's promises going?

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New Year's resolutions are really promises that you've made to yourself. Did you make promises this year? Have you made promises before? How did it make you feel when you couldn't even keep the promises for the first month of the year? Probably not good!

We have a tendency to be our worst critics. Breaking your resolutions may have made you feel that you are not as "good" as you should be. STOP RIGHT THERE!!!

Life is an average and success in achieving goals should be measured in small increments. Some days will be easier than others. Your success is determined by your strategy, your attitude and, more importantly, your definition of it.

Do the next few things look familiar? They are often among the top resolutions for people every year.

- Lose weight
- Increase activity
- Save money
- Spend less
- Get more sleep
- Manage time better

They are admirable things to want to work on but you'll never make any permanent changes if you don't hold yourself accountable. You have to do this by making your goals specific, measurable, realistic, and timed. Set yourself up for overall success, by building in short term objectives or accomplishments that you can track while you're in the process of making these long term changes.

How much money do you want to save and how much disposable income do you have to allow you to do that? Track your spending for a month and list every single item that you spend money on. Then, evaluate to see where your money goes.

How much weight do you want to lose overall and how much can you realistically and healthfully lose one week at a time? If you used to eat out ev-



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ery day and you change to eat out only three times per week, then you've made progress towards your health, your finances and potentially your time. That is the way you need to analyze your success.

It isn't always black and white. There is and there should be grey. People who see their goals in black and white are frequently the ones who give up altogether after one bad day or less than optimal outcome. Achieving all of these goals is like running a marathon. You have to make sure you are prepared before you start. There will be some points throughout the marathon that will make you think you should quit. Don't set the bar so high that you can't demonstrate to yourself that you've made some positive changes towards achieving your goal. You may lose some battles but win the war overall. That should be your focus. Plan to keep a promise every day and track your progress on each one.

Life is an average. Some days will be better than others, but each day that you've made a change or an attempt towards achieving your goals, you've succeeded. Plan ahead, be prepared, and smile while life happens.