



HEALTHYLIVING

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LIFESTYLE

Having trouble keeping New Year's resolutions?

Make goals, not resolutions,
says local expert

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Making New Year's resolutions seems to be an intrinsic aspect of changing our calendars to Jan. 1 each year, but Norwell resident Juliette Mayers, author, inspirational speaker, and founder and CEO of Inspiration Zone LLC, says it's sometimes better if we set goals rather than make resolutions.

"I think people make New Year's resolutions with very good intentions, but then many people aren't able to follow through," Mayers said. "I tell people to not make resolutions, but to make goals." Mayers explained that only 8 percent of people keep their resolutions.

"That's very low and pretty depressing," she said. "I encourage them to be more deliberate about the things they want to accomplish. I encourage them to set goals."

Mayers said that although setting goals might sound

pretty basic, many people don't understand how they work.

"They're really not goals unless they're SMART: Specific, Measureable, Actionable, Realistic, Time-bound," she explained.

The other key concept is to prioritize your goals, she said.

"A lot of people will make too many resolutions," Mayers said. "I encourage them to pick their top three and see them as goals. Or if they have many goals, choose no more than five, so they're not overwhelming themselves or trying to do too much too soon."

Choose something that works for you

Probably the most popular resolution people make each year is to lose weight.

Mayers suggests that people consider how their weight-loss plans will work out in their lives.

"People forget to make it realistic to their experience," she said. "If you're someone who works 10 hours a day and you have a dog and you



Juliette Mayers

have children, will you be able to get to the gym every day? Or would it be more realistic to commit to walking daily – either outside or at home on a treadmill – something that you can realistically accomplish?"

It's important to choose initiatives and tactics that are realistic to your goal, that are realistic to your way of life.

"If you do this, you're more likely to meet your objective," Mayers said.

Mid-January slump

Perhaps you started the year with the intention of going to the gym each day, but now, several weeks later, you're finding it harder and harder to get there.

"In most cases, you can still salvage that objective if

you apply some structure and process to your initiative," Mayers said.

Instead of giving up on your goal, analyze why it's not working.

Perhaps you're that person with the job and the children and the dog. Mayers suggests that you look at the resources around you, such as relatives or friends.

"Share your goal with them and maybe enlist some help to relieve some of the obstacles that are preventing you from achieving your goal," she said.

Find something you love, make it a habit

Another important aspect to achieving your goals is to identify the things you truly love.

"Maybe you went to a gym and, trying to lift weights, you discover you don't enjoy it; maybe you hate lifting weights. Try different things, like a Zumba or yoga class," Mayers said. "Find out what works for you. Once you do that, do it repeatedly until it becomes a habit. Before that time, there's a very high risk of giving up."

It takes about 21 days to de-

velop a habit, according to Mayers, but once you make something a habit you're more likely to stick with it.

"Don't just try it once," she said. "The consistency makes a difference, and it's easier to keep at it if you enjoy what you're doing."

Make it measurable

"Another thing that's really important to do is the metrics – in order to measure it you must monitor it," Mayers said.

And monitoring means facing reality.

"If your reason for going to the gym is losing 10 pounds, you must step on the scale," she said.

You have to determine how you will measure success and stick to it

"Perhaps your goal in going to the gym isn't weight loss," Mayers said. "Maybe it's the number of days you go or to achieve a better heart rate or to walk 10,000 steps a day. Whatever you select, that becomes your method of accountability."

Be accountable

One way to stick to it is to write it down, she said. A sec-

ond strategy is to tell someone else about it.

"It's important to establish accountability to yourself and accountability to others," Mayers said. "Your success increases as more people become invested in your plan."

Ask for support

A final thing that's important to your success is getting support from your family, your village, your key people, Mayers said.

"Don't feel you have to do it alone."

Juliette Mayers is an author, inspirational speaker, and founder and CEO of Inspiration Zone LLC, a firm specializing in multicultural consulting, brand management and thought leadership. She is a networking expert and professional speaker. Her mission is to elevate brands and inspire individuals to achieve their dreams. Mayers' book, "The Guide to Strategic Networking: Dream. Plan. Create. Achieve," is available on www.juliettemayers.com and on Amazon.com. You can follow her @juliettemayers.