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SAY 'NO' TO NEW YEARS' RESOLUTIONS

Nardia Norman recommends reflection before resolution, for success in 2015.

How many times have you vowed, after a food-laden, alcohol-fuelled break that 'this year will be different!?' That 'this year I really will lose weight and improve my health'?

Here's the thing: new year's resolutions are *the* most overrated type of goals you can ever set for yourself. They simply do not work, and I'm here to suggest you save yourself the hassle (and disappointment) and avoid falling prey to the new year's resolution trap by seeking an alternative.

Now, I'm not suggesting you should avoid goal setting altogether. On the contrary, goal setting is a vital necessity for achieving personal growth! What I am suggesting though, is looking at it from a new perspective.

Here is my four-step guide to successfully achieving your goals:

Step 1. Stop focusing on the outcome

An outcome-based goal is something like 'I want to lose 10kgs' or 'I want to get fit'. This is the result you are seeking, or in other words, your 'destination' or your 'what'. Of course, as important as knowing your destination is having a road map or a plan of attack to get you there because otherwise it will forever remain a dream. So once you set your outcome, park it, so you can focus on how to get there.

Step 2. Focus on your road map

Your road map is essentially your 'how'. It is your answer to 'What do I need to do,

in order to achieve my goal?'

For many people this part of the goal setting process is never done well, hence why their objectives are not achieved. Interestingly, success actually has little to do with a lack of motivation or willpower, and everything to do with a lack of 'skillpower'.

The truth is, most of us do not possess the skills we need to successfully achieve our goals. So we need to ask ourself:

- 'Do I have the right resources to achieve my goals?' and 'If not, how/ where can I find them?'
- 'Do I have the right knowledge to achieve my goals?' and 'If not, who do I need to seek out, or how can I find the information I need to succeed?'

Step 3. Set your behavioural goals

Once you have identified the skills or areas you need help with, you can then go ahead and start setting your behavioural goals. These are the small changes in your current behaviours that, when applied with patience and consistency, will move you towards your outcome. For example, setting small daily goals such as 'eating three cups of vegetables', 'drinking 2L of water' or 'going to bed by 10pm every night' are all positive changes in behaviours that can directly influence your ability to lose weight or improve your health. Remember, over time it's the small positive changes in habits that will result in big change!

Ask yourself the following questions:

- 'What in my current situation/ environment needs to change?'
- 'What behaviours are keeping me from achieving my goals?'
- 'What are the top two or three things I need to do on a daily basis, that will take me closer to achieving my goal?'

4. Find your 'why'

More often than not, achieving a weight loss or health-related goal is actually not about the outcome per se, and more about the meaning that is attached to achieving that goal. By this I mean, if you lose weight, you will you feel sexier, more powerful, more confident and maybe more in control. Similarly, do you want to improve your health so you can be a better role model for your kids, or so you can have the energy and vitality you need to keep up with them? Or maybe you just want to make sure you'll be around to see them grow up.

Understanding your 'why' is the most powerful motivator of all. By identifying the true emotion behind your goal you are more likely to be fuelled by the desire and motivation required to stick to your road map. Dig deep to find out the true meaning of your outcome, and the toughest part of the battle is won.

Last but not least, wait until you are a few weeks into the new year before you set your goals. Without the celebratory distractions and once you're settled into the new year, you can really sit down and nut out the things that matter most. **OH!**