



Making Successful New Year's Resolutions

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The annual making resolutions to change and improve our lives is upon us. Now that the year is coming to an end, and in this case a decade as well, you may be reflecting on what you want to do differently next year. Several sources say that approximately 80% of us fail at making actual changes successful by creating resolutions. I can tell by seeing attendance at the gym that by mid-February resolutions have fizzled to a culture of past practices.

Why do so many resolutions fail?

What does it mean to be to be “resolute?” Merriam Webster defines resolute as, “marked by firm determination.” One may argue that the typical New Year’s Resolution doesn’t have a firm determination. Even though we have the best intentions, resolutions are more like a wishes than an actual plan. If you want to create change based on a developed planned pathway for success, then use these six elements.

1. Foundational Knowledge: What do you need to know to make the change successful? This may require some research, reading to develop a deeper understanding of the information and ideas needed to make the change happen.
2. Application: How do you see yourself applying this change? Thinking about how this change impacts your life is vital to making your resolution successful. You may need to acquire new skills or change your thinking (critical and creative) to manage the desired changes you are making.
3. Implementation: How will you implement the change? Consider the steps you need take to embed the ideas, people, and/or lifestyle changes into your life. Think about what this change will look like as your resolution is successfully achieved.
4. Human Dimension: In this phase of your resolution plan, you should picture how your change will help you see yourself in a new way so that you learn more about yourself and the way you will interact with others. Most resolutions will create a new, and better you. Determine how will this change look in your own mind and how will it affect how you are seen with others. How will others view you as you accomplish this change?
5. Caring: In your plan, you think about what the change is going to do for what you feel and value. What interests will you have based on what the new you has accomplished by making your resolution? How will you demonstrate your values in the way you care about yourself and others?
6. Finally, Learning How to Learn: To close the loop on your resolution plan you should examine how this change will make you a better person, what you will be able to do better than before and how you will direct your life in new ways.

Most of us haven’t created an extensive plan like this in making our New Year’s Resolutions. By thinking through your resolutions using these plan elements will help you from wishing for change to making successful change. Happy 2020 and good luck with making your resolutions succeed!

*The six elements listed above were adopted from Dee Fink’s work highlighted in our book, **Designing Effective Teaching and Significant Learning**. This template was initially developed for course design. Since its inception, I have discovered how these elements work for change management in general, and making New Year’s Resolutions specifically. You can read more about this by ordering your copy of the book published by Stylus, by visiting [Encoreprodev.com](http://encoreprodev.com).*

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