



New Year - New Beginning - Now What?

1 Corinthians 9:24: (NASB) *Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win.*

In just two days we will begin yet another new year. With it comes new experiences and new opportunities to make a difference in our own lives, as well as the lives of others. Many people make “New Year’s Resolutions” and most don’t keep them. Why? Why don’t resolutions usually work? Stay with us and find out!

What makes us “resolve” to do something?

A Compelling Vision

🔊) **January 15th cutoff, *Persist with your Goals, Tony Robbins***

- *How is your new year coming out so far? I know it’s early. It’s January 15th. You know what that day means, don’t you? January 15th is the cutoff. Statistics show that 95% of the people that actually made a New Year’s resolution have already broken it by today. And that’s if you even made a resolution!*

What happens to us that we don’t keep our resolutions?

🔊) **Step 1: Have a Vision, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins***

- *The first step for lasting change is very much like making a New Year’s resolution. Fundamentally, it is the same. The first step is, you gotta have a vision for what it is you really truly want, not what you think you want or what you should have. What are most people’s resolutions? I’m going to stop eating sugar. I’m going to stop smoking. I’m going to lose ten pounds. The problem is that it is not very inspiring for most people. It’s not telling you what you are going to get; it’s only what you are not going to do. It’s hard to have you move forward with that.*

What makes a compelling vision that would permanently affect the direction of your life? Lots of inspiration, a clear destination and an understanding of the course: Hebrews 12:1-3:

A clear grasp of the end result: 2 Timothy 4:6-8

What fuels our resolve?

Once we answer this question we will have bridged a major gap between our personal “status quo” and true personal growth. This is BIG!

Powerful Reasons to Follow the Vision

🔊) **A vision pulls you, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins***

- *A vision that really works is one that excites you. If you say, well my resolution is to lose a few pounds, well that’s okay but it’s not very compelling...it’s got to be something that has to have the power to pull you - not something you have to push yourself to do. Those are two different kinds of motivation. Push requires willpower and willpower never lasts. What will last is pull - having something so exciting, so attractive, something you desire so much that you have a hard time going to sleep at night and you get up so early the next morning that you rocket it to the next level.*

What “pulls” you in your life? We tend to gravitate towards what pulls us. Are we being pulled by good things?

Would true rest from your burdens pull you? Matthew 11:28-30: Jesus does not remove the burdens, but he gives us rest. This is a great promise! It gives us the ability to quiet our minds. Here is a reason to have this compelling vision in our own Christianity.

🔊) **Step 2: Reasons, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins***

- *Along with that compelling vision, you gotta have strong enough reasons that you are going to follow through when the going gets tough. That’s one of the biggest things missing for most people...Most importantly they don’t have strong enough reasons to push themselves through to get that dream, to get that goal, when the inevitable challenges come up. You don’t let the fear take you over if you have strong enough reasons. Those reasons can be positive or*



negative. They can be: If I don't do this, this is what it's gonna cost me. If I do this, this is what I'm gonna gain in my life. Reasons come first, answers come second.

Would an inexhaustible source of strength pull you? Isaiah 40:30-31: Instead of relying on ourselves, we rely on God. **Would the solemn word of the Almighty pull you? Isaiah 45:22-24:** God has a plan and has sworn by Himself that He has control. There is something bigger at work here. This changes the way we look at things and how we act. **Would the ability to cast fear aside pull you? 1 John 4:16-18:** We have confidence that God's judgments will ring true in this world - and throughout all of eternity - throughout all of the universe. If we have real confidence in this, that perfect love of God can cast fear aside, we know the end result will be godly. That is compelling and it pulls us. It is a test of our faith to focus on the right kinds of things. **Proverbs 29:18:** Having a compelling vision and strong reasons are very important aspects for success.

What keeps our resolve alive?

 **Resolve; don't wish, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins***

- *Everything in life is always changing - we don't have to work on change! Change is automatic, but progress is not. So if you want to make real progress, then you've really gotta look at your life in a different way. Say, "I've got to take control of this process and not just hope it's gonna work out," like people do when they make a resolution. Because isn't that what people are really doing at the beginning of the year? They say, here are my resolutions for the year, and they really basically tell you their wishes. It's their wish list. They hope it all comes together. Then they call it a resolution, but they don't know what a resolution is. When you resolve something - to have a resolution is to resolve it - when you resolve, this is how it's gonna be, you cut off any possibility except the thing you've committed to.*

It doesn't take resolve to experience change, but it takes resolve to make progress.

What is the automatic change versus the progress mentioned in this verse? Hebrews 5:12-14: The Apostle Paul is chastising the Hebrews because they have changed - but only from being a baby in Christ to a big baby in Christ who needs to grow up! They changed, but they did not grow or make progress.

Is my Christianity an entitlement or a privilege? As an entitlement, we are looking for what we can get. As a privilege, we look for what we can give.

Review and Feel Daily

 **Step 3: Review and feel, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins***

- *First step: A vision that's compelling. Second step: Make sure there are strong enough reasons to follow through. Third step: You've gotta review it and feel it every day. There is a part of your brain called the reticular activating system (RAS). That part of your brain determines what you notice in the world. It's really important because when you set a goal, when you get really clear on a vision, there are strong enough reasons and you review it enough that it becomes a part of you, that part of your brain says, anything that relates to this I need to notice...the brain becomes incredibly acute at noticing anything to get you to move forward.*

Here's an example - if you want to buy a particular car, you may notice that you suddenly see that car everywhere! That is because your brain is more focused on it and brings it to your attention. **Philippians 4:4-8:** Review and feel, review and feel...commit these Scriptures to your mind and heart. These will help us to progress. It is here that the test of *courage* must rise to great heights, for whenever we are called upon to rise up - to change - to step out - we are *always* faced with FEAR. Although it has been required throughout, courage is now center stage where it will have its showdown with fear.

Courage can develop with 1) a motivating vision, 2) truly compelling reasons that pull us towards that vision, and 3) reviewing and feeling that vision every single day.

Joshua 1:9: (NASB) *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*



How do I find a truly compelling personal vision?

Why bother, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins*

- *Most people don't even make a resolution anymore. Why? Because they have made them for years and years and years and they know they are not going to follow through. So after a while, who wants to disappoint yourself? Who wants to be upset with yourself? Why even bother to set a new standard for this year when you know it's going to be the same as last year?*

There are three basic forms of vision: futile, fuzzy, and fiery!

Futile Vision: This is a vision that is not only small and unchallenging, but it is self-destructive. It actually brings us down, for it is based in self, laziness and inactivity. This is usually the "default." The default is our fault, because we can choose to change it! 2 Timothy 2:15-18: We need to focus on spirituality in its purest sense, and avoid putting our faith in traditions and ceremony. Our spirituality should be vital!

Fuzzy Vision: This is a vision that is obviously unclear. It is a vision filled with mediocrity, rationalization and indecisiveness. It only has the power to maintain the status quo. It does not excite or incite, yet it is the vision that is held by most of us. "I want to lose weight," is an example of a fuzzy vision. It is too general a statement that does not provide any specific motivation. It won't get you to be different. The fuzzy vision does not require a lot of courage because there is no specific, dynamic commitment.

A cause or an effect? *The Hidden Power of Setting Goals, improvementaudio.net*

- *One of the most important decisions you will ever make in your life is do you want to be a cause or an effect? When you choose to be a cause you make things happen. When you choose to be an effect, you settle for whatever happens to you. You are satisfied to laugh and to cry, to live and to die, based on the action of others.*

James 1:22-24: People like this are still babies in Christ...and big babies aren't so cute anymore!

Fiery Vision: This is the vision that is bigger than you are, more powerful than you are, and a vision that you can only with your greatest effort, play a very small, yet very significant roll in. But it takes humility. It is all about the vision, not about "me." This is how we can make resolve happen in our lives. **Jesus fulfilling the fire of this vision:** John 2:15-17: The temple was turned into a marketplace to gouge the consumer. Jesus had enough of his Father's holy place being turned into a place of cheating and robbery. He disrupted the thievery.

How do I latch onto powerful reasons for my resolve?

Progress is the secret, *Persist with Your Goals, Tony Robbins*

- *Getting things is not going to make you happy. That's good news in a tough economy. It doesn't matter what you get, whether it be money or opportunity. All those things might excite you for the moment. Even a relationship, as magnificent as it may be, might be exciting for a while. But if you don't keep growing, that relationship isn't going to stay exciting. The secret to real happiness is progress.*

We need to focus on the progress towards Christ-likeness. **Remember this text from the first hour?** Matthew 11:28-30: (NASB) ²⁸Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Did you notice...? The concept of a yoke means that you are going to work. This yoke will press us but not hurt us. Jesus is asking us to work alongside of him. Once the Apostles received this rest, was their journey over? No! It had just begun! How can we rest if we are supposed to work? What are we resting from? We rest from the toil and burden of trying to manage our own lives, and making decisions based on our own thinking that we as human beings think is best for us. We rest from that and adopt the yoke of Jesus. We take on the decision-making through the eyes of Christ and God's word. There is rest in that because they are in control and are much bigger than us. We can manage our lives with a higher purpose. It is our responsibility to carry it out but not to create it. We can rest from the stress if our faith says to us, "Walk in Christ's footsteps."



What am I expecting, not only from life, but specifically from my own Christianity?

Is my Christianity an entitlement or a privilege?
Am I looking for all of the abundance and none of the effort?

Matthew 5:38-41: My expectations should now lead me to an attitude of tolerance and giving... now *that* is progress! If our reasons for our Christianity have anything to do with becoming like Jesus, then we should be pulled towards this: Matthew 5:43-45: Loving your enemy is giving, not getting. My expectations should now lead me to an attitude of love and forgiveness ...now *that* is progress! That is what Jesus did. Most of us want to do something special with our lives. That can come from being a part of something bigger than we are, it can come from a striving for excellence, and it can come from a life or world-changing idea. Christianity is all of these!

Romans 12:4-8: Christianity is being part of something bigger than you! It is about brotherhood, striving for progress together, and helping others to be faithful. If you are given certain abilities, you are to use them. Play your part as well as you possibly can. Strive for excellence!

Romans 12:21: (NASB) *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

What a world-changing idea! This starts with the body of Christianity and will expand to the world in general.

How do I get over my own lack of motivation?

 Focus on momentum, how to move forward with lack of motivation, goalguru.com

- *When you feel stuck and are lacking motivation, here's what you do: You don't focus on needing motivation to act, act anyway. If you focus instead of finding motivation or waiting for the motivation, and focus on creating momentum by just taking an action that will propel you forward, the motivation is going to come back very quickly because you will be excited again and not discouraged about achieving that goal. So, focus on momentum rather than motivation to propel you forward.*

When preparing to take the Promised Land, Joshua approached the task in three steps:

Step 1: Focus Joshua 1:8-11: (NRSV) ⁸*This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth; you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to act in accordance with all that is written in it. For then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall be successful.* Remember the things that are most important. Keep God's law in your heart and mind and don't let it go. This is more important than being lazy and unmotivated!

Step 2: Reassurance ⁹*I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.* By keeping the most important things in your mind, you will have God protecting and guiding you. That is so reassuring! The Bible is filled with such promises.

Step 3: Preparedness ¹⁰*Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people, ¹¹Pass through the camp, and command the people: Prepare your provisions; for in three days you are to cross over the Jordan, to go in to take possession of the land that the LORD your God gives you to possess.* The people had a reason to prepare. Remember the kind of battle we are in...others who fight along with us depend on us! They struggle along with us. We can find inspiration by remembering that others go through similar experiences as we do.

1 Peter 5:6-11: We have to be ready. The devil could be looking for us! But there are others that are in the same dangers and we are to work together. There is great power in co-laboring. Even a word from someone can really change your outlook. We can help each other in many ways.

Remember the many simple things we can do: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-22: The new year is an opportunity to review parts of our lives and *make progress* rather than *experience change*. It is time to affect the way things go in a godly way, because the gospel is such a motivating vision that I have my personal reasons to make myself a different and better person, giving honor and praise to God our Father and Jesus our Lord.

*New year, new beginning...now what?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,*



Think about it...!