

# Resolution Renovation

## Goal-Setting Workbook

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# 4 Steps to Design a Plan for Change (that will stick!)

## Introduction

Every January, millions of people make a loose plan for self-improvement in the coming year. For the first week of January, 75% of them rise to the occasion. But then, the story takes a turn when life as we know it must go on and 'getting fit' or 'getting out of debt' seem further and further from our reach. So why do we fail? As it turns out, we aren't terrible people with no willpower; we may just need a new blueprint for crafting our resolutions. Let's take a closer look at the problem with traditional resolutions and how we can make a plan for improvement that will stick.

There are two systems in our brain that drive our decisions and behavior: the future self, driven by logic, and the present self, driven by emotion. We typically craft our resolutions around logic – things that we know we 'should do' for long-term benefit. However, while goals such as becoming healthier or saving money may be logical– they are too abstract to keep us motivated on a daily basis. Even if these goals are genuinely important to us, consistently prioritizing them when they are competing with everyday obligations is very difficult. In addition, choosing a resolution based on our perceived shortcomings (i.e., things we 'need to do') sets the stage with a negative undertone, and we can't make positive change focusing on the negative, or things we *don't* want.

**This workbook will walk you through four steps to create goals that are personally meaningful to you, and highly achievable.**



# Step 1: Take Inventory

In this exercise you will look at the many different priorities and roles you play in your life and take inventory of how much time and energy you are devoting to each one. You will also reflect on how satisfied you are with each area and how important it is to you. You can think of this as taking inventory of your life. By identifying where you are currently devoting your time and energy, you can set meaningful goals to give priority to what matters most in your life.

## Instructions:

- 1) You will be creating a visual representation of where you are spending your time and energy using the table provided.
- 2) Determine your life categories. In the example below, the categories of career, social life, family time, down time, positive leisure and spiritual are used. You can use these same categories or you may choose to customize based on what makes sense for you.
- 3) Now, consider how you spend your time and energy in each of these roles. Assign a percentage to each category/role, with all rows equaling 100%. (Include waking hours only).
- 4) In the column labeled "Satisfaction", assign a score on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 represents complete satisfaction with this category in terms of the time and energy spent on it as well as the resulting outcomes (e.g.: you may be excelling in and enjoying your career, but are unhappy with the amount of overtime you are working, resulting in a mid-range satisfaction score).
- 5) In the column labeled "Importance", assign a score on a scale of 1 to 10 where 10 represents the highest importance. All categories will be important to you, and we need a healthy balance to thrive. It may help to think about which ones are at the core of your quality of life relative to the others.

## Example:

Category	Time spent (%)	Satisfaction (scale of 1-10)	Importance (scale of 1-10)
Career	45%	2	4
Social	25%	8	7
Family	10%	4	10
Positive leisure (hobbies, exercise, volunteering, etc.)	10%	7	5
Down time (social media, TV, etc.)	10%	7	5

Exercise: Create your Life Inventory

Category	Time spent (%)	Satisfaction (scale of 1-10)	Importance (scale of 1-10)

**Life Inventory Reflection:** As you review your life inventory and compare the time spent in each category with the importance of that category, reflect on the below questions to better understand how you’re currently engaging your priorities.

*Does the time you spend in each category reflect its importance to you?*

*Where are the largest gaps between importance and satisfaction?*

*In addition to time, where do you find you are spending extra energy in one category at the expense of another?*

## Step 2: Imagine Your “Best-Self”

We continuously receive messages, consciously and subconsciously, about what ‘successful’ or ‘healthy’ people do and look like. We ask ourselves “What do I criticize myself for that I should change?” “What do those people do that I should be doing?” When our focus is on other people, it’s harder to tune in to our inner realm and what is truly important to us (and not what we feel pressured into from society or the media). ***Your resolution should be personal to you and reflect what matters most to you, and you alone.*** Visualization can be a powerful tool for creating a clear picture of what it is you actually desire.

### “Best-Self” Visualization Exercise

#### Instructions:

(Please read through these instructions before attempting the visualization exercise)

- 1) Find a place where you can spend 15 - 30 minutes uninterrupted (ideally when you are well rested and open to thinking creatively). Bring this worksheet (or a few pieces of blank paper) with you.
- 2) Close your eyes and fast forward to 2022. Envision you as your best self by evaluating each component of your life. Jot down your ideas, feelings, and sensations exactly as they come to you: it may be a picture, a quote, a desired emotion... whatever comes to mind.

**“Best-Self” Reflection:** As you think about your “best-self”, use the prompts below to structure and record your thoughts:

*What behaviors, relationships or habits have I outgrown?*

*How are my health and energy levels? How are my personal finances?*

*What improvements have I made? How have I grown and challenged myself?*

*What are the professional and personal aspirations I’ve met? How are my professional and personal relationships?*

*How am I contributing to something greater than myself?*

Now, take a look at your responses and use them to create affirmation statements that support what you've envisioned. Put them in the present tense. (Remember, you fast forwarded to 2022 and have already accomplished and become what you set out to do this year).

Examples:

- I work with a sense of purpose and fun.
- I find ease in daily stressors and challenges.
- I have meaningful relationships with friends who support and accept me.
- I am learning and growing with a sense of curiosity.
- I nourish myself with healthy food and high-quality sleep to stay energetic and engaged in life.

## **My Affirmations:**

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Take these affirmations and best-self descriptors with you to the next exercise in order to help you set your goals.

## Step 3: Create a Plan for Success

Now that you have spent some time reflecting on where you are at currently, and where you would like to be, it's time to create a plan to move in the right direction. During this process, keep in mind that we can't change who we are at our core. A good resolution doesn't ask someone who is not a morning person to get up and run at 5am. An effective resolution strengthens a quality you already have but may not be fully tapping into. Or, helps you shift your focus and energy to parts of your life that are important to you. If you feel you need to tune in to what your innate strengths are, you could choose to complete the free [Values in Action Assessment](#).

### Goal-Setting Exercise

#### Instructions:

- 1) Using your Life Inventory Results, and your Best-Self Visualization notes as guidance, identify up to 3 priority categories (career, social, family, etc.) that you would like to focus on over the next several months. Write this in the "Life Category" column in the chart below.
- 2) Working from the affirmations you created, set a goal for each of your priority categories by making a bold statement in the present tense (as if it were already true). Record this in the "Goals" column in the chart below.
- 3) In the action items column, detail the small steps you will take toward this goal today, this week, and this month.
- 4) Keep your affirmations and your goals in a visible place (perhaps on your refrigerator and by your work computer or bathroom mirror) and reflect on them daily.
- 5) Mark your calendar to re-evaluate in one month, updating your action items to continue to make progress toward your goal.

#### Example:

Life Category:	Goals:	Action Items:
Social Life	I prioritize spending meaningful time with friends who support and accept me.	Today: Reach out to a friend I miss
		this week: Schedule a dinner date with a friend
		this month: Host a game night

My Plan:

Life Category	Goals:	Action Items:
		today:
		this week:
		this month:
		today:
		this week:
		this month:
		today:
		this week:
		this month:



## Step 4: Re-Energize as Needed

You may find that it's necessary to enact some extra strategies to help keep you on track or refine your vision. Here are a few booster tips if begin to feel stuck:



**Outsource your willpower.** Enlist some help by sharing your goal with a buddy for accountability. If you are sharing your goals with a friend, only one of you has to be really committed on any given day in order for you both to stick to it; you can pick up each other's slack so-to-speak.



**Reward yourself.** Pair the initial task with something fun so that it becomes a habit rather than another item on your "to-do" list. For example, watch your favorite TV show while lifting weights – you can even make a game of it! Remember, your resolutions should invoke positive feelings, not negative, and using a "reward" system can help support this.



**Internalize the identity.** In other words, 'fake it 'til you make it'. Fully internalizing the thing you are trying to achieve before you achieve it actually may help you stay motivated and make choices in the interest of your goal. "I am someone who trained for a marathon" or "I live with financial abundance."



**Take a baby step.** Change doesn't have to be all or nothing. In fact, it shouldn't be. If you find your goals are feeling too large or daunting, ask yourself "What's the smallest possible step I can take today that would be consistent with my goal?" This might be a quick 5 minutes of physical activity or cleaning or meditation... and that's ok. As long as you took some step toward your goal you will likely still feel some sense of accomplishment and renewed motivation.



**Fill your cup.** Making progress toward your vision of your best-self isn't all about action. It's important to work with our natural need to alternate between times of energy expenditure or "doing", and times of restoration or "non-doing". Taking time for self-care and relaxation fills our cup so that we can work toward our goals with vigor and not feel overextended. Think about how you will incorporate time for non-doing in a way that will replenish your mind and body.