

A BETTER WAY TO CREATE A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION LIST

BE REALISTIC ABOUT YOUR GOALS, WRITES ILOTT



STEPHEN ILOTT
Column

I ask you - why is it your New Year's resolution list always becomes yet another crumpled bit of detritus at the bottom of the drawer of shame in the kitchen, languishing among the dead batteries, loose screws, crispy elastic bands and wads of Canadian Tire money?

And when you rediscover it again about mid-March you instantly get that pang of regret at not getting to even one of the ambitious, neatly numbered items.

Well the answer is simple - lower your expectations, make the goals shorter term, more specific and

something you can apply realistic time frames to.

Instead of something like, "Lose 200 pounds by June!" promise yourself to eat less between meals or do 10 knee bends each day. Make it a no-brainer. A tiny alteration in habits makes you hungry for more - more exercise, not cheesecake.

Change comes from the inside, pressure comes from the outside. We always, inevitably rebel against outside pressure.

Here's a bigger one: instead of 20 things on your list, write one. Yes, only one. Let's say it's to learn to speak Italian. That's one of my goals for 2020. You write that one goal at the top of the page. At the bottom you write how this will change your life - maybe it's exercising your mind, maybe it's widening your social circles or maybe it'll make you feel wonderful being able to converse with locals on your next vacation.

In any case, that is your goal and at the bottom is your visualization of how life will change - something to fix in your mind. Then go back up to the top again

and under the goal create a list of things you have to do to kick-start that goal: download a course, join an Italian club or buy an audio book to repeat in the car on the way to work.

Whatever the list is, make it consecutive steps with each one building on the other with carved out moments to update and renew the pledge to yourself and, most importantly, make progress.

Try it. It'll bring a little therapy to your new decade. Happy New Year everyone!

Stephen Ilott is a professional home organizer with decluttering.ca and author of The Domestic Archaeologist. For more information, visit www.decluttering.ca or contact him at info@decluttering.ca or 416-460-8098.

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