



From Wishes to Reality

5 Key Questions to ask of your Resolutions

This week is all about celebration and hope for a happy and successful new year! A large part of that hope can hinge on the “New Year’s Resolution.” Most people make resolutions to set goals to better ourselves and the lives of our families. However, there is a big difference between **making** and **keeping** those goals and resolutions.

Even the most specific and seemingly attainable resolutions can turn out to be merely wishes and wants that fall frail by February. Do you know what it takes to turn your resolutions into reality? This article reveals five key questions to ask to help establish realistic and healthy resolutions and the tips to help you successfully achieve them.

Is my resolution a "should do," a "want to do," or a belief of what I will do?

Most people “should” watch what they eat and exercise more, and may really want to shed some pounds. But all the wishing and hoping and dreaming won't bring about the desired changes. "Should do" resolutions rarely inspire and excite us, but rather cause dread and are less likely to become a reality. Knowing you “should” clean the garage is very different than wanting to and believing you will do it this weekend. A "want to" resolution will not be actualized, unless we are willing to do what it takes to make it happen. This may mean giving up some things, and starting to do new things in order to make it actual.

For example, I would like to be fluent in Spanish. But am I ready and willing to do the necessary homework to achieve that goal? Not right now. I don't believe I can accomplish that currently. However, if I truly believe I can do something, it is just a matter of time until I will be able to speak another language, or have achieved a weight loss goal, for example. Believing you can achieve any goal is being ready and willing to make the required changes in our thoughts and in our actions.

Is my resolution outdated or reflective of my current priorities?

Many times we announce a resolution as if on autopilot because it sounds good, or because it is popular with most people. It may not even be among your current priorities. Or, worse yet, it's someone else's priority for you. Your dreams today may be very different than they were a year ago. Have you grown or made improvements in your personal, family or financial life? If your circumstances or situations are different than they were a year ago, you may need to update your resolutions. Your goals should be reflective of your current priorities, rather than just leftover ones from the year before. Goals that have the best chance of being accomplished are the ones that inspire and excite the person you are right now. Freshen up how you define your resolutions and your attitude and energy will be revitalized too.

What are my resources to accomplish this resolution?

Having supportive people around you will be a great resource in working toward your goals. Keep close those friends and family who care about you and your success. You may even seek out a group in your community with similar goals.

Many times we don't have the best information about how to pursue a particular goal, so we become frustrated and give up. As the New Year begins, give yourself time to research your best options for moving forward. Speaking with an expert or researching your topic of interest will lay a foundation for an action plan, rather than just jumping right in and "winging it."

To turn your resolutions into a reality, you first need to clearly identify your life purpose and its priorities. Your values are what make life important to you. Schedule your priorities into your day and into your life. When these are incorporated in the "meat" of your goals, you are utilizing your greatest resource – the core of who you are. You will also have a framework to guide you to get back on track when you made mistakes.

What has stopped me before?

Assess what has caused you failure or frustration in pursuing previous New Years resolutions. Maybe you really wanted something and also believed you could do it, but had no plan or commitment to make it happen. Or perhaps your self-concept was weak, causing constant derailment. Making small positive steps will enhance your self-worth and thereby provide the momentum to continue. Create this positive cycle to enhance your accomplishment.

Another roadblock of success is having an "all-or-nothing" mentality. Simply because you slipped today and ate 2 pieces of chocolate caramel pecan chess pie, it does not mean your fitness goals for the year are out the window. You are not perfect. You can make a new decision any day, and in spite of past decisions. Don't let unrealistic expectations pressure you into quitting!

Why am I choosing this resolution?

Working toward this resolution will be leading you toward an abundance of what? How will your life be different when you achieve this goal, and why does that matter?

List the benefits that your resolutions will provide you personally and perhaps for those around you. Focus on your motivations – improved health, enhanced relationships, thriving children, and a prosperous future, for example.

Visualize your life wish your wish as a reality. You may event try exhibiting how your new life will look by making a Dream Board. Trim photos or other images from magazines that illustrate examples of your aspirations. Post these visual reminders around you. These inspirational pictures or words will help you start living today as if your improved life were real and actual. What choices can you make today that will bring you one step closer?

**Contact Centerstone at (615) 460-HELP (4357),
for information about help and support for you or your family.**

About Centerstone

Centerstone (www.centerstone.org), celebrating 50 years of service in 2006, is the largest behavioral healthcare provider in Tennessee and the ninth largest in the nation. A not-for-profit organization, Centerstone provides a full range of behavioral health and related educational services to individuals of all ages and their families. Centerstone is devoted to research that seeks to identify, treat and eliminate mental illness. Each year, the organization provides services to more than 50,000 individuals. Children, adolescents, adults, seniors, and families all receive help from a multitude of different programs at more than 65 facilities and 140 partnership locations throughout the region. For more information about Centerstone, please call (615) 460-4357 or toll free at (888) 291-4357.

About Susan Gillpatrick, MEd, LPC, CTS

Susan Gillpatrick, Centerstone Crisis Management Specialist, primarily works in the field with clients in critical incident response situations, and in Centerstone's wellness trainings and presentations. She is also responsible for planning and implementing marketing and growth strategies for Centerstone's Crisis Management Strategies.

In recent years, Ms. Gillpatrick worked for the Shelby County Government Victims Assistance Center in Memphis. There, she co-developed a model program for the state of Tennessee entitled, "Homicide Response." Her work in this area received the 2000 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

Ms. Gillpatrick is a Licensed Professional Counselor, Certified Trauma Specialist, Certified Workplace Conflict Mediator, and Mental Health Service Provider in the state of Tennessee and a National Certified Counselor. She is also a member the American Counseling Association, the Association of Traumatic Stress Specialists, the Tennessee Mental Health Counseling Association, and the Middle Tennessee Employee Assistance Professionals Association. She is a frequent presenter at local and national conferences, and has had numerous articles published. She received her Master of Education degree in Human Development Counseling from Peabody College at Vanderbilt University.

To request Susan Gillpatrick to speak with your group or organization about complete wellness in living, contact her at (615) 460-4445 or susan.gillpatrick@centerstone.org.