

# BEHAVIORAL & FINANCIAL INSIGHTS

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## Resolutions and Habits

We are still in the first half of the year, and there is a high likelihood that most New Year's resolutions have already failed. Studies have shown that less than 25% of people actually stay committed to their resolutions after just 30 days, and only 8% accomplish them moving forward.<sup>(1)</sup>

Such a high failure rate may be due to making bold resolutions we aren't quite ready for. In other words, the resolution may be aspirational, though not realistic. Another reason may be that there is no plan to get from A to Z by way of systematic progression. We sprint right out of the gate and burn ourselves out.

The key to real progress, be it personal or professional, is taking incremental steps. Rather than aiming to implement sweeping changes (big resolutions), it is better to focus on a few simple habits. There are *habits of commission* (I am going to do ABC) and *habits of omission* (I am not going to do XYZ). No matter the kind of habit, to successfully form and retain them, follow the same method.

### Creating Habits That Stick

Begin with a resolution and identify the reason or purpose behind the resolution. The resolution is the "goal," the purpose is the "why," and intentional habits become the "action plan" to get us there. To improve the likelihood of sticking with new habits, we should form ones that are not major deviations from our current lifestyle. Making a 1% change may not be noticeable or something to brag about but may be far more meaningful in the long run.

Once we master a new habit, we add another habit that gets us one step closer to our resolution. This becomes a continuous cycle of improvement that empowers us and helps us become the people we aspire to become. A marathon is completed with many small steps, not a few giant leaps. We should view resolutions in a similar manner.

### Today is the Best Day to Start

No matter what, today is the best day to start habits that will improve our lives. Why today? **Because it isn't tomorrow.** When we are forming small habits, we don't face uncomfortable or unnatural changes to our existing behavior or lifestyle. Hence, there is no reason to procrastinate taking that first step towards making our resolution a reality!

<sup>(1)</sup> <https://www.forbes.com/sites/ashiraprossack1/2018/12/31/goals-not-resolutions/?sh=b5255a23879a>