

Chapter 1: Understanding Resolutions

Resolutions are declarations of intent that reflect your desired objectives. They are quiet vows that bridge the gap between who we are and who we aspire to become. Marked by a resolve to work toward development and personal growth, resolutions are forged through a process of self-reflection. They help us create a roadmap to improve various aspects of life and embark on the journey toward betterment and self-improvement.

The journey of self-improvement began for me during a pivotal moment when I found myself confined within the walls of a jail cell following my DUI. As I stared at those walls, a profound question echoed within me: How did I end up here? It was then that I realized the importance of being brutally honest with myself and embarking on a process of genuine self-reflection. Looking back, I wish I had initiated this transformative journey much earlier.

I sincerely hope that you won't have to reach such extreme circumstances before taking an honest inventory of your own life and contemplating the fundamental questions of your identity and aspirations. For the longest time, I was trapped in the cycle of my drinking, going nowhere. Well-meaning individuals advised me to quit, and at that moment, I agreed with them wholeheartedly. However, as the night progressed, I found myself once again clutching a bottle.

It was a stark realization that acknowledging the need for change wasn't enough; I had to actively commit myself to achieving my personal goal of overcoming alcohol dependence.

Personal goals give us a clear sense of purpose and direction, guiding us on the way toward self-improvement. Resolutions also help us to stay motivated through the process of setting feasible targets along with a plan of action to help achieve them.

Regardless of whether it relates to sobriety, a healthier lifestyle, pursuing opportunities for professional development, nurturing meaningful relationships, or acquiring knowledge and new skills, resolutions provide the framework as well as the purpose needed to enable personal changes.

The Psychology Behind Successful Resolutions

The psychology behind successful resolutions involves understanding the factors contributing to setting and achieving goals effectively. Let's delve into some key psychological aspects that can impact the success of resolutions.

Goal Setting

The establishment of clear, specific goals is the beginning of successful resolutions. With definite intent, we can be more aware of what to do for us to attain the outcomes we desire. By setting clear and well-developed goals and milestones, we can track our progress and identify areas that need improvement to achieve our objectives.

This step, for me, was hard. I would set the goal of stopping drinking but could never achieve it. It was clear and specific, so why did I keep going back to the bottle? For me, it was dividing that goal into smaller steps.

Dividing set goals into smaller tasks enables the development of a structured action plan, which defines the stages required to move toward desired results. When goals are broken down into workable stages, it creates a sense of clarity and allows us to be organized as well as focused on our resolutions.

So, how can something like an alcohol addiction be divided into more manageable steps? For me, it was a focus on the day instead of setting the goal to stop drinking forever. I first began with an hour, then with half the day, followed by the goal of making it an entire day. Everybody has to begin somewhere to achieve what they want. So don't get discouraged if your goal seems unmanageable. Break it down into manageable steps that you can achieve. No matter how small they may seem. Balancing challenges and feasibility is critical when establishing your resolutions. Setting goals that are too easy may cause complacency; setting goals with an appropriate level of difficulty that requires hard work is what helps you step outside of your comfort zone and stay motivated.

Basic Motivation

Intrinsic motivation, or the internal drive to pursue goals for personal satisfaction, plays a significant role in successful resolutions. When individuals feel genuinely interested, passionate, or connected to the goal they've set, they are more likely to stay motivated and persist in their efforts.

Self-Efficacy

Having faith is a key factor in successful resolutions. In other words, it is self-efficacy – the belief that you can get things done

and achieve your objectives. When you start believing in yourself, your mind is more likely to see the challenges and plan out ways to overcome them. Set realistic goals to improve your self-efficacy and make sure they align with your abilities and resources. It helps you believe your goals can be attained when they are within quick reach.

On the first day, I knew deep down that I couldn't make it through the entire day without drinking. So, instead, I set a smaller goal for myself to go an hour without alcohol. But even after achieving that goal, I found myself giving in to temptation and drinking once again. The next day, I managed to resist until half a day had passed, but I eventually gave in again. I knew that on the third day, I needed to make it through the whole day without drinking. But as the hours passed by and my cravings grew stronger, I began to doubt my ability to do so. In a moment of desperation, I called a close friend and shared my goal with them. Confiding in someone else eased the pressure and gave me the support I needed to make it through day three without drinking. However, the fear of falling back into old habits still loomed over me as I thought about those who counted on me and how my addiction not only hurt me but also those around me.

It is imperative to acknowledge your prior achievements on the way, no matter how big or small. I know people might disagree with counting one hour of no drinking as a success, but for me, it was. Don't let anyone else belittle your steps. Each step forward becomes evidence that you can achieve your goals. Celebrating those achievements builds confidence and momentum.

Essentially, self-efficacy is about faith in yourself. Set high, reachable goals and divide them into small steps. Enjoy the progress you make along the way. This way, you'll become more confident and increase your chances of fulfilling the resolutions.

Planning

Planning plays a key role in successful resolutions. Outlining details about when, where, and how each task should be pursued increases one's commitment, thus improving chances of follow-through. I would often make promises to myself and others that I wouldn't touch another drop of alcohol after a wild night out. But in reality, I didn't have a solid plan in place to avoid drinking. Whenever I found myself in social situations, my body would automatically reach for the bottle, disregarding any previous intentions. It took a harsh realization for me to finally admit that I needed to steer clear of the triggers that tempted me to drink. I had to create a plan for when that first drink was presented in front of me. My solution involved having an accountability partner whom I could call for support. But even with this plan, it was still a constant battle between my physical craving and my mental and emotional knowledge of the harm drinking brought upon me. So, I set specific guidelines for myself - when the desire for a drink arises, no matter where I am, I will handle it by reaching out to my accountability partner and reminding myself of the disastrous consequences alcohol has caused in my life.

Monitoring and Feedback

Regularly monitoring progress and receiving feedback can greatly impact the success of resolutions. Monitoring allows for

self-reflection, helps track progress, and provides an opportunity to make adjustments when needed. Feedback, whether from yourself or others, can provide valuable insights, encouragement, and support throughout the resolution journey.

Resilience and Coping Strategies

Successful resolutions often require resilience in the face of setbacks or challenges. Developing effective coping strategies, such as problem-solving skills, emotional regulation techniques, or seeking social support, can help individuals overcome obstacles and stay on track toward their goals. I don't think that coping strategies will develop overnight. Our brain creates neuropathways when we have done something over and over. For me, it was drinking. Drinking helped relieve stress and made me feel good. So, because of those neuropathways, my go-to when I was stressed or wanted to feel good was alcohol. It became an automated response because I created it by drinking day after day. So, when I finally said no, my brain fought me. When I faced stress or wanted to feel good, I felt the pull of the alcohol, but I had to do something else. Talking about the stress was my coping strategy. I would call someone I trusted and talk to them about it instead of using the old neuro pathway. That created a positive response to something negative in my life. So, now, when something stressful happens, I talk to someone about it, even if the only person that can listen at that moment is Jesus. I talk to Him. So, if you don't have someone going on the journey with you, don't use that as a cop-out to not achieve your resolution.

Accountability and Support

Sharing resolutions with trusted individuals or seeking support from like-minded communities can increase accountability and motivation. When others are aware of your goals and progress, it adds a layer of external motivation and support, making it more likely for you to stay committed and accountable.

Accountability has helped me tremendously with setting an effective resolution. The key word here is effective. I stated my goal to another person I trusted, respected, and looked up to. We decided that every night, I would text this person whether or not I had been sober that day. I text her every night. It has allowed me to focus on my goal every day. It has helped me to know that if I fail, I will have to send that text. That accountability has motivated me and helped me to stay sober.

Strength

Understanding and applying these psychological factors can greatly increase the likelihood of successful resolutions. You can optimize your chances of achieving your desired outcomes by setting clear goals, nurturing intrinsic motivation, building self-efficacy, planning effectively, monitoring progress, developing resilience, and seeking support. Remember, successful resolutions are not just about the result but also about the personal growth and progress made along the way.

In a world where doubt and uncertainty often cloud our minds, a wonderful combination of inner strength and spiritual faith can provide comfort and relief. Responding in faith and trust

in Jesus results in a wellspring of power to help us overcome challenges and do it with confidence through life's obstacles.

Our inner strength comes from Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

"That according to the riches of His glory, He may grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in your inner being" -Ephesians 3:16 ESV.

This inner strength comes through the power greater than ourselves. A spiritual power that gives strength when weakness comes. Doubts can come from a lack of confidence, fear of failure, or uncertainty about what lies ahead. But when we have confidence in the strength of Jesus and not in our own abilities, we develop a positive attitude that moves us forward. This belief in a power greater than ourselves empowers us to take risks, persevere through tough times, and embrace new opportunities that come our way.

Faith in Jesus provides a unique source of guidance and comfort. Jesus represents love, forgiveness, and wisdom. When we trust Him, we take comfort in knowing we are not alone. These beliefs empower us to navigate life's challenges, make decisions that align with the values of Jesus, and help us find God's purpose in our actions.

It's important to remember that faith is a deeply personal experience, but regardless of what someone has been through, they are called to Him.

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I

am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

-Matthew 11:28-30

Regardless of the specific journey we took to Jesus, the combination of seeking Jesus as the higher power and our personal relationship with Him can be a powerful force in our lives, helping us to grow, thrive, and stand mentally with strength and perseverance in the uncertainty of life.

Pitfalls In Setting Resolutions And Reasons For Their Failures

There are a few common reasons people fail to follow through with their resolutions. One such reason is that their resolutions tend to be unclear. For instance, a resolution with a vague goal, such as “exercise more,” without being particular about the number of times or form can make it difficult to work on. People must define what they want to accomplish.

Setting unreasonably high expectations is another reason why resolutions fail. If people set their sights too high or expect instant change, they are usually quick to turn back when put under pressure. People should set goals that are difficult but possible, bearing in mind their capacities and abilities.

Lastly, resolutions fail because, many times, people are not ready to make changes in their lives. A successful person has to be flexible. Motivation plays a key role. Resolutions will not remain interesting to individuals when there is no real sense behind them; therefore, if one does not have a clear “why?” in mind when making a resolution, they may not be motivated to

work towards it. Identifying the purpose behind the goal and how it can be related to personal values may keep people persistent.

By understanding these typical traps and taking positive action to avoid them, people can enhance the success rate of their resolutions.

Famous Resolution stories

Having a resolution can be helpful, but it's important to remember that success and fame come from many different things, like talent, working hard, good timing, and luck. However, resolutions can give people a clear purpose and direction, which can motivate them and help them on their path to success and recognition.

Martin Luther King

Martin Luther King Jr. wanted all races to be treated equally and to have the same rights. He realized that African Americans in America were facing discrimination and injustice based solely on the color of their skin. Therefore, he dedicated his life to fighting racism.

One of King's main goals was to end racial segregation. He believed that regardless of race, everyone should have the right to go to the same school, travel on public transport together, and eat at the same restaurant. He organized protests, marches, and boycotts to challenge and draw attention to this cause.

King's dedication to the fight for equal opportunities for black people was deeply rooted in his belief in justice and the fundamental rights of every individual. He recognized the

systematic denial of voting rights to black individuals in the South, using tactics like poll taxes and literacy tests to suppress their voices. King saw voting as a vital means for black people to have a meaningful say in the decisions that directly impacted their lives.

He understood the importance of improving black individuals' financial conditions and working opportunities. He saw economic inequality as a shape of discrimination that directly affected black groups, banning their access to proper jobs, fair wages, and development opportunities. With a sturdy notion of justice, King tirelessly advocated for the same employment possibilities and truthful treatment inside the workplace, aiming to interrupt the limitations that hindered the economic development of the African American community.

Throughout his activism, King placed tremendous emphasis on nonviolent strategies to ensure change. He firmly believed in the transformative capacity of nonviolent protests, sit-ins, and boycotts as a powerful approach to raise recognition, foster talk, and assign the prevailing norms. He drew suggestions from influential figures like Mahatma Gandhi, who had efficaciously employed nonviolent techniques within the conflict for Indian independence. This inspiration served as a force behind King's dedication to peaceful activism.

One of King's iconic speeches, "I Have a Dream," articulated his imagination and prescience for a future in which people could be evaluated based totally on their character as opposed to the color of their skin.

King's combat for equal rights for black people was tireless. He challenged racial segregation, fought for balloting rights, and strived for monetary parity. His corporation's belief in peaceful tactics to attain transformative progress turned into a cornerstone of his activism through his influential speeches and dedication.

Nick Vujicic

Born in 1982 in Melbourne, Australia, Nick entered this world in unprecedented circumstances. During her pregnancy, his mother, Mila, endured a myriad of doctor's appointments assessing her developing baby. At five months, the prognosis was dire - Nick was diagnosed with tetra-amelia syndrome, a rare disorder where he was born without any limbs.

Despite doctors advising termination, Mila refused to give up on her son. She believed in miracles and trusted God had a plan. At birth, Nick cried loudly - a testament to his fierce will to live despite his physical differences. His parents, Boris and Mila, showered their limbless newborn with love, seeing beyond his disability to the perfect child within.

Nick's early infancy was filled with challenges. He couldn't roll over, crawl, feed himself, or explore the world like other babies. His devoted parents and sisters spent time devising creative ways for Nick to be as independent as possible through tools adapted to his body. Through their devoted, sacrificial care, Nick learned resilience from a young age.

A cruel reality set in as Nick grew and began to attend mainstream kindergarten and school. Due to his physical

anomalies, many children either stared in confusion or reacted with fear, tormenting Nick verbally and socially ostracizing him at recess. Lonely days left deep psychological scars and shattered Nick's budding self-esteem.

In those dark moments, Nick drew closer to God and gained comfort and empowerment, believing his life possessed value regardless of earthly perceptions.

At 15, compelled to help others facing marginalization, Nick gave his first talk to 400 people. As he tearfully shared lessons learned, audiences responded with thunderous applause and affirmation. Nick glimpsed the transformative ability of vulnerability when paired with hope. This epiphany sparked Nick's unwavering resolve to share his testimony globally.

After graduating, Nick's public speaking took off. Traveling nationally and abroad, he touched millions through motivational conference talks and TV appearances, always discussing the growth that comes from facing adversity courageously. Crowds were stirred by witnessing this limbless man swim, write, and live life to the fullest through ingenious adaptations.

Further expanding his impact, Nick penned several best-selling books detailing his inspirational journey. His nonprofit Life Without Limbs touched millions online and in-person worldwide. Against all odds, Nick's potential proved limitless, just like his message of inherent worth and embracing life's blessings through faith.

In 2012, Nick married his beloved wife Kanae, and they've since welcomed four miracle children - a family Nick cherishes immensely.

Today, Nick continues blazing a trail of hope worldwide as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit.

Giannis Antetokounmpo

Giannis Antetokounmpo was born in 1994 in Sepolia, a working-class neighborhood of Athens, Greece. As the son of Nigerian immigrants, he grew up in an atmosphere of hardship and struggle. His family of six children lived in a small apartment that was cramped and in shambles. Money was scarce, and often, the choice was between paying rent or eating well.

From a young age, Giannis learned to be resilient. He saw his parents' challenges in providing for their children, working long hours in low-wage jobs. To help contribute, Giannis spent his mornings selling goods on street corners before school. Though only a child, he understood the weight of responsibility.

Despite obstacles, his parents instilled in Giannis a strong work ethic and belief in pursuing dreams. They encouraged his passion for basketball, even when they could not always afford basketball shoes or gear. Giannis would practice for hours at neighborhood courts, honing his natural athletic gifts through tireless repetition. The sport provided both escape and dreams of a better future.

By his teenage years, Giannis' talent was undeniable. Though initially shy and gangly, his passion and work transformed his physique. Scouts took notice of his leaping ability, size, and skill set, which were unlike any they had seen. Against all odds, he was selected in the first round of the 2013 NBA draft by the Milwaukee Bucks.'

America posed new challenges of language, culture shock, and immense basketball expectations. But Giannis met each with resilience. Through private lessons, he learned English to communicate better. He put in extra training hours on the court to refine his skills. With each success and setback, Giannis' drive and determination grew stronger.

Slowly, he began realizing his potential. Through relentless effort in the weight room and skill sessions, Giannis sculpted his lanky frame into an athletic marvel. After years of toiling in obscurity, the world now saw 'The Greek Freak.'

In 2021, Giannis lifted the Bucks franchise to the NBA championship - achieving the pinnacle of his sport. Yet he remains humble and grounded. To this day, Giannis works to give back through philanthropic efforts, sharing his success and inspiring others as a testament to perseverance in the face of adversity.

In essence, resolutions are essential in working toward personal growth and development. By leveraging the advantages of resolutions, people can work toward self-improvement and overcome challenges to achieve success.

Lesson

The process of finally stating a goal is the first step to success. It allows you to declare for yourself what you are trying to achieve. When I was in addiction, admitting that I wanted out was easy, but making steps to achieve success was hard. I had to admit to myself and others that I failed. That is not an easy thing

to do. It can be uncomfortable and scary. However, it is necessary to admit your faults to move forward.

When I did this, it was like putting light on my dark problem. It showed me that there was a way out and Jesus was/is my strength. When I thought I needed or deserved a drink, he provided the strength to overcome that feeling. The desire to live for him was stronger than my desire to drink.