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In-House Corner: New Year's Resolutions—Part 4



In this blog feature, our in-house readers share tips, anecdotes, and thoughts about topics that arise in their daily practice. Last year, we received so much feedback on [our three blogs relating to New Year's resolutions](#) that we have decided to do it again. Here are New Year's resolutions for 2024 from our in-house readers:

1. I admire people who make New Year's resolutions and actually stick to them. It's one thing to create an intention and another to adhere to it. But I'm a big fan of aspirational thinking!
2. I am not one to make resolutions.... I like to think that I am a work in progress and am trying to continuously improve... I don't need an arbitrary date to implement change.... why wait?
3. I love making resolutions for the New Year because I am pretty good at keeping them. Realistic goals are energizing.
4. I always seem to make several New Year's resolutions each year, generally revolving around eating better or exercising more. I generally abide by the resolution for a month or two before life gets in the way and I abandon them.

This year I made a different kind of resolution where I decided to no longer use exclamation points in my written communications, both professional and personal. When I would reread something I had written with an exclamation point - or multiple points - it made it seem too overused and spurious.

Maybe at the time it was no big deal but seeing two or three exclamation points for wishing someone a job well done for something simple and reading it weeks later just seemed too much. I didn't like the fact that you had to include exclamation points for your honest expression of congratulations, support, or admiration to be legitimized.

At first, it was difficult as my instincts were to often not only include an exclamation point but several of them. Again, both in professional and personal communications it was difficult to not use them and yet still communicate the emphasis they provide.

For example, wishing someone Happy Birthday or job well done without the exclamation point made it appear sarcastic or disingenuous. While it was difficult at first, I found that in place of the exclamation point I would add an additional sentiment to make up for its absence. Such as "Happy Birthday. I hope you have a great day." But even that was difficult to get over as the required exclamation point or multiple points always seemed a minimum requirement.

Eventually by March, I got over the trepidation of not using them and began to feel liberated by no longer needing to use them at all. In a couple of weeks, I will have reached one year without using a single exclamation point and owe my liberation from this captor to a New Year's resolution I was finally able to keep.

5. Not big at New Year's plans, but if I think of it as "I'll plan a better diet, more exercise, and more fun. Wishing myself - and all - good focus."
6. Years ago, I made a resolution that I have kept and I use the New Year anniversary to look back to see how I did. That resolution was to learn something new each year of my life. One year I took my first class in watercolor in January; another year I began my first long term Bible study and read the Bible for the first time. Some years it has been doing something new in service to others or teaching others something to enhance their life journey.

Learning things for myself have given me much joy but making a difference in another's life has made my life have meaning and purpose which I trust will live on beyond my own journey. So now I ask, "did this last year make a difference?"

7. My talented writer friend Karla Araujo wrote this [hilarious blog](#) about New Year's Resolutions a decade ago. Here's an excerpt:

Like about half the American population, I'm a sucker for annual promises. And, like eighty-eight percent of holiday avowers, I'll fail miserably in my quest to change.

So this year, I've decided to take a new tack. At fifty-seven, I guesstimate that I've made and broken about one hundred and fifty resolutions. I have not, to date, lost the cumulative four hundred and fifty pounds, run the fifteen thousand miles, embraced Buddhism, mastered Lotus Headstand with Bound Legs pose, nor run my overeager American Express card through the shredder – all of which I'd resolved to do in holidays past.

Why set myself up for another debilitating failure? But before developing an updated New Year's strategy, I decided to see how my resolution history jibes with my female post-50 peers. Using a rigorous two-pronged approach – both an email survey and live interviews around the table at a recent girls' night out (carefully timed between the second and third rounds of margaritas), I asked a randomly chosen group of friends what their New Year's resolutions might be this year and how successful they'd been at sticking to them in the past.

Responses ran the full gamut from "lose weight" to "lose weight." One friend mentioned that she thought she might work on her relationship with her husband – perhaps right after she lost some weight. How

successful was this hand-selected sample at achieving their past goals? The results were best summed up by this quote: "Resolutions always lead to chocolate binges."

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