

Mental Notes

A Monthly Newsletter

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Making (and Keeping) New Year's Resolutions

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Well, here you are again. It's a new year and you've decided that *this* is the year you're gonna do it. You've decided this is the year you'll [insert *New Year's Resolution* here]. You're determined you'll stop _____, or start _____. Maybe you'll lose _____ or make a decision about _____. Of course, you probably said the same thing last year...and the year before.

Go ahead. Admit it. Making a New Year's resolution is easy. Keeping one isn't. Now that you admitted it---a good first step---there's something you can do to increase your chances for a successful outcome. Actually, there are several things you can do that just might help you make good on those promises you've made to yourself. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Have a plan. OK. You've set a goal for yourself. That's good. However, it will be very difficult to accomplish that goal if you don't have a clear plan of action. As such, determine the steps you'll need to take to accomplish your goal. Break it down into smaller, manageable "sub-goals." These smaller subgoals will help you experience success and bolster your confidence in your ability to accomplish the greater goal. For example, if "getting in shape" is your New Year's resolution, start by parking a little further away from your classes or office building and walking a little more, or take the stairs instead of the elevator. Before you know it, you'll be able to spend 45 minutes on the treadmill with no problem.

2. Create your plan immediately. Don't start tomorrow. Start today. The longer you wait, the more likely you are to lose motivation and possibly even forget your resolution altogether.

3. Put it in writing. Don't just give lip-service to your resolution. Write it down. State your resolution in declarative lan-

guage, record the steps necessary to reach your goal and keep the plan accessible. Consider posting your plan on the refrigerator or inside the bathroom mirror as a daily reminder.

4. Revisit and revise your plan as needed. Remember, the plan you create today, may not be the plan that ultimately helps you accomplish your goal. To that end, put reminders in your planner, on your computer, on your mobile phone, etc. to revisit and revise your plan. The plan is of no use if it doesn't suit your needs.

5. Practice positive self talk. If you can envision it, you can do it. If you believe it, you can be it. Create a mantra for yourself to be repeated (internally) as a source of encouragement and support. Not only will this counteract any negative self-talk, but it will change your way of thinking about yourself and your goals.

6. Remain flexible. Curiosity may have killed the cat, but rigidity kills a resolution. Expect the unexpected. Life has a habit of throwing the proverbial curve ball or two so be prepared for disruptions and disappointments and don't be too hard on yourself when things don't go exactly as planned.

7. Celebrate your successes, big and small. This goes back to step one. Those small goals you created for yourself merit celebration in the same way...though perhaps not to the same degree...as your overall goal. Treat yourself right...and treat yourself when you succeed. For example, if your goal is to improve your study skills and, thus, your grades, celebrate when you make that "B" on the mid-term, especially if you typically make "C's." Rewarding yourself for smaller accomplishments will make the larger goals seem all the more worthwhile.



UNO Counseling Services is here to serve the mental health needs of UNO students by providing **personal counseling** and **career counseling** on a time-limited basis. We also offer a variety of **psycho-educational workshops** each semester and are often asked to provide **classroom presentations** on particular topics. In addition to these services, when requested, we offer **support groups** addressing particular areas of concern. With this in mind, we want to hear from you. Let us know what topics are of interest to you for workshops, classroom presentations, or support groups by completing a short **needs survey** on our website. Information collected will help us prepare presentations and services to meet your needs. Our surveys are anonymous and no identifying information will be transmitted with your submissions.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

UNO Counseling Services welcomes all students and aspires to respect cultural, individual, and role differences. Our goal is to create a safe, supportive, and affirming climate for individuals of all races, ethnicities, national origins, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, religions, ages, abilities, sizes, socioeconomic statuses, languages, and cultures.