

Real New Year's Resolutions for Our Children and Families

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"From now on..." "never again..." In the beginning of a new year, many of us declare our intentions about what we want to change or improve in our lives. We resolve to start or strengthen constructive habits, and end or decrease those that are not. We set short- and long-term goals, and draft plans for meeting these goals. Thinking about our well-being and that of our children and families, we make promises, with our best intentions to keep them. Yet few people keep and reach these so-called New Year's resolutions. A saying in Spanish states **"hell is full of good intentions."**

"What is worth much, costs much." Making changes is not easy at all. The development of most habits takes a minimum of 21 consecutive days. And it takes an average of seven serious attempts to break a well-established habit. When it comes to addictions, it is more difficult yet.

"Yes we can." With determination, persistence, support, and professional help when needed, we could turn our intentions into actions, and reach our goals.

"One is indebted to what one promises." Let's determine what it is we want to change, and decide to commit to these intentions, letting others know about it.

Resolutions for healthier bodies:

- Eat more veggies and fruit.
- Eat less junk food.
- Exercise regularly.
- Get enough rest.
- Reduce or eliminate alcohol and tobacco use.

Resolutions for brain functioning:

- Read on a daily basis.
- Learn a language.
- Practice art and music.
- Visit educational places (libraries, museums, theaters, nature).
- Reduce passive activities (TV watching).

Resolutions for emotional well-being:

- Express affection to loved ones every day.
- Dedicate one-on-one time to each child regularly.
- Schedule fun time with the family on a weekly basis.
- Reduce clutter and chaos in the home environment.
- Eliminate mistreatment and violence at home.

"One at a time." It is better to attempt few changes simultaneously, and increase these once the new habits become established.

"Actions speak louder than words." It's most effective to put into practice specific, realistic measures, which can be implemented as part of our day-to-day life. Set daily, weekly, and monthly goals.

It helps to identify which circumstances facilitate and which hinder staying faithful to your plan. Increase the presence of facilitating factors, and avoid or minimize contact with people, places, and situations that interfere with your intentions.

"Faith moves mountains." To strengthen your determination, seek inspiration and encouragement. Keep your goal in mind. Preserve an optimistic attitude. Celebrate when you act in accordance to your intentions and approach your goals.

"Step by step, we can go far." Persistence pays. There will be obstacles, slips, and relapses. It's a matter of **"getting back on the horse."**