



THE CHANGE
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Why People Fall Short of Their Goals (and Resolutions)

By Adrian Pei

Two reasons why we often don't achieve our New Year's resolutions...



I went from being in heaven to hell in just a few hours. It was Super Bowl Sunday (a number of years ago), and I sat down with my family to enjoy watching the game with pizza and a delicious bucket of fried chicken wings. What more could you ask for?

The only problem was, before I could even finish watching the game, I was writhing in agony on the bathroom floor with a severe case of food poisoning. I remember feeling shocked at just how bad it felt, and I just wanted relief from the pain. My wife Jenny suggested that I go to the hospital—and after a few hours of suffering, I agreed.

On an emergency room bed, I finally got some relief when they put me on an IV. I could feel life and energy flowing into my body in such a visceral way. That was when I had a moment of clarity. I said to Jenny, who was at my side, **“I need your help. I really need to lose weight and eat better. But I don't think I can do it alone.”**

She lovingly agreed to be with me and support me on my journey, which involved a lot of modifications to our diet, as well as an exercise regimen that I followed with greater discipline than ever before. Slowly but surely, I lost over twenty-five pounds and got my health into much better shape. But that wasn't the end of the story.



I knew that so many people who lose weight end up gaining it back, and I didn't want that to happen. **So I started to take notes about change—what worked for me and why, and what didn't work and why.**

Here are two lessons I learned:

1. I cannot rely on sheer willpower to consistently be there for me.

There were days when I felt motivated and ready to take on the world, and there were days when I just couldn't muster up the effort to exercise or resist a tempting food. So if my plan was to rely on myself to have constant discipline and self-control, it just wouldn't last. So what was the alternative?

- **I realized I needed to build other people into my change plan and system, to provide energy and structure.**

I needed to create a system that didn't just rely on me! Even if I got the latest and coolest apps on my phone to help me to track diet and exercise, even if I put reminders on all my calendars and devices, and even if I created detailed plans and schedules—these would all eventually fall short because they only involved me. Involving other people into my system—**a trainer, a coach, a mentor, a partner who would diet and exercise right alongside me**—was critical to change!

2. I cannot assume that what works for others, will work for me.

How many people go with a trendy diet or exercise plan because everyone is talking about it or trying it? However, if I'm only doing something when others are doing so, what happens when all the New Year's chatter and resolve dies down?

- **Instead: I had to find out what worked for me, because that very process engaged my mind and motivation levels—which in turn led to change.**

Did it matter which system I used, or what I chose to reward my success or progress? It mattered a little, but not as much as the fact that **I came up with it, and I bought**



into it. That sense of ownership allowed me to continue progress even when everyone else had given up on old trends and had moved on to the next fad.

Here's the most exciting part of this all. Yes, I have learned to understand my body so that I can maintain good health for the long run. But even more, I've been able to take away some tried and true principles of change, that have **helped me influence change in many other areas of my life**—including my relationships and the systems and organizations surrounding me! That's the most valuable gift I could have hoped for!

If any of this resonates or intrigues you, **I've created workshops on “*The 4 Keys to Change*” and “*Why Change is Hard, and How to Navigate it Well*”** that cover these principles and their applications to various aspects of our lives. These topics are also covered in our **learning cohorts**. If you're interested in either or just want to talk, **e-mail me at adrian@changenavigation.co or [schedule a call on my website](#)**. You don't have to go through the changes of life alone. I look forward to hearing from you!

Discussion or Reflection Questions:

1. What's a significant goal or resolution that you successfully achieved? What do you think made you able to achieve it?
2. When you think about goals or resolutions you've failed to achieve, where do you think things broke down and why?
3. Which principles in this article resonate with you, that you could apply to your current or future goals and resolutions? How do you think that might help you? How might you apply them, specifically?



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