

Happy New Year

2005

The New Year

New Year's Eve falls on December 31st, the day before the first day of the calendar year. In the United States, Canada, England, and many other countries around the world, New Year's Eve is a festive occasion marked by boisterous celebrations to welcome the new year. In the United States, many people go to New Year's Eve parties. Crowds gather in Times Square in New York City, on State Street in Chicago, and in other public places. At midnight, bells ring, sirens sound, firecrackers explode, and everyone shouts, "Happy New Year!" People also drink a toast to the new year and sing "Auld Lang Syne."

People around the world celebrate the new year on different dates. The early Roman calendar used March 1 as New Year's Day. Later, the ancient Romans made January 1 the beginning of the year.

During the Middle Ages, most European countries used March 25, a Christian holiday called Annunciation Day, to start the year. By 1600, many Western nations had adopted a revised calendar called the Gregorian calendar. This calendar, the one used today, restored January 1 as New Year's Day. Great Britain and its colonies in America adopted it in 1752. --WORLD BOOK

New Year's Resolutions / *how to stick to them!*

1. Make The Commitment — You owe it to yourself to make this work. Make sure it's 100% the right thing for you right now and then go for it all the way.

2. Replace A Bad Habit With A Good One — It's not so easy getting resolutions off the ground. Habits are just addictions of a sort — addiction to cigarettes, food, laziness. Psychological or physiological — it doesn't matter. If you train your brain the right way, you'll be doing good things in no time. Shopoholic with maxed out credit cards? Get addicted to saving money by researching and buying stocks and mutual funds instead. Addicted to junk food and want to lose weight? Remember — Research tasty, healthy low-fat foods and get addicted to eating well and exercising.

3. Be Prepared — Make sure that you have everything you need on hand, in order to make your change. If your resolution is to get a new and better job, equip yourself with a good resume and an interview outfit so that you're never caught off-guard. If your resolution is to quit smoking, always keep carrots, chewing gum or nicotine gum handy to keep your hands and mouth busy.

4. Get A Buddy — The easiest way to ensure that you'll stick to something is to partner up with someone who has the same goal(s) as you.

Create a support group for each other — encouraging triumphs and understanding defeats, but never allowing the other to give up.

5. Break It Up — When trying to nix old vices, break up the task into manageable chunks — i.e. *I can make it to next Friday without eating potato chips; or, I will lose*



Better to do something imperfectly than to do nothing flawlessly.

--Robert H. Schuller

Love What You Do.

Do What You Love.

--Wayne Dyer

Some people see things as they are and say

"Why?"

I dream things that never were and say

"Why not?"

--George Bernard Shaw

"Take a chance! All life is a chance. The man who goes the furthest is generally the one who is willing to do and dare. The "sure thing" boat never gets far from shore."

--Dale Carnegie

"They may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel."

--Carl W. Buechner

"Happiness is an attitude of mind, born of the simple determination to be happy under all outward circumstances."

--J. Donald Walters





Incidents of self-harm continue to grow among young women.

A Cry for Help

Sudden epidemic or gradual increase over the years? Either way, self-mutilation is a huge and growing problem that “has now reached critical mass and grabs our attention,” says Russ Federman, Ph.D., director of counseling and psychological services at the University of Virginia.

In 2003, nearly 70 percent of counseling center directors reported increases in cases of self-injury such as deliberate cutting or cigarette burning of body tissue. “It’s now on all our radar screens,” Federman notes. “It gets talked about with deans.”

Self-harm is not a diagnostic category, so its exact incidence is unknown. But women are twice as likely to do it as men. And it typically accompanies a range of conditions—borderline personality disorder, eating disorders, anxiety and depression. It most commonly occurs, however, in antisocial personality disorder, accounting for high rates of self-harm in prisons.

It’s highly disturbing for a student to walk into her dorm and find her roommate cutting her thighs or arms with shards of glass. Further, self-injury always mobilizes a crisis response; suicidal intent must be ruled out.

Self-harm is a serious symptom, says Federman. “But it isn’t about taking one’s life. It freaks others out. But rarely does cutting constitute imminent danger to the self. There’s not usually suicidal ideation.”

Self-mutilation is “the opposite of suicide,” insists Armando Favazza, M.D., professor and vice chairman of psychiatry at the University of Missouri, author of *Bodies Under Siege: Self-Mutilation in Psychiatry and Culture*, and a leading authority on the subject. “Those who do it want to live. They do it to feel better. It’s an impulsive act done to regulate mood.”

It is an extremely effective treatment for anxiety, he points out. People who do it report it’s “like popping a balloon.” There’s an immediate release of tension.

It serves “an important defense—distraction,” adds Federman. “In the midst of emotional turmoil, physical pain helps people disconnect from intense emotional turmoil.” But the effect lasts only hours.

Further, “it is the only action that can effectively stop dissociative episodes,” says Favazza. “That makes it especially common among girls who were sexually abused.”

Too, self-mutilation has to do with self-punishment. Not to be overlooked is the sense of power it confers. “It allows students to take control of painful processes they feel are out of control,” especially chaotic relationships, says Federman. Sometimes it’s a cry for help. Cutting is usually a private process and the scars are hidden. But some people will cut an arm and don a short-sleeve shirt.

Although most cutting is a private act, Favazza reports that he knows of cutting parties—groups of girls who get together to cut in each other’s presence. And some students like to hang out with the cutters. That has given rise to “pseudo-cutters,” those who cut not to gain release but to belong to a social group.

It’s imperative to stop self-mutilation as soon as it’s discovered, as cutting can take on a life of its own with addiction-like qualities. Treatment usually involves psychotherapy plus SSRI antidepressants, which decrease the impulsivity behind most acts of self-harm.

By: HARA ESTROFF MARANO / MAR 2004
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NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS CONTINUED...

1-2 pounds each week. This makes the goals more possible, therefore increasing the feeling of success. At the end of the hour, day, week or month, double the amount of time you will hold out. Eventually you won’t have to measure the time — it will be part of who you are. If you are trying to go in a new direction, the rule is the same. Set goals in small pieces — i.e. *This week I will go to the gym three times; or, Today I will send out five resumes.*

6. Give Yourself Rewards — *If I stop biting my nails this year I am buying myself a new ring to show off my nice new nails. But in the meantime I will set up smaller goals. For example, if I don’t bite my nails for the whole month of January, I will buy myself a professional manicure. The same for February. If I make it through three months of no biting I will buy myself some leather gloves.* Apply this to your goal. Set the goals in increments and then offer yourself little pats on the back for making it there.

7. Get A Professional — When all else fails and you are nearing the end of the proverbial rope - seek professional help.

8. Stay Positive — Don’t let that little devil on your shoulder talk you out of your goals — no matter how tough it gets. You can do it. Believe in yourself and your ability to accomplish.

Good luck!

BY NADINE SILVERTHORNE / FROM LIFE NETWORK.CA



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