



6 steps to keeping that New Year's resolution

Many people make New Year's resolutions, but unfortunately most don't stick with them, says Joseph Grenny, one of the co-authors of *Influencer: The Power to Change Anything*.

He did an online survey of 1000 readers of his *Critical Skills Newsletter* and found that 98% said they failed to keep their resolutions.

"Our good intentions unravel when our intentions meet our first impulse," Grenny says. "So we may go out and see something on sale, yearn for it, then buy it, and there goes our budget."

He also analyzed the behavior of 900 people who struggled to make a personal change and found that those most likely to succeed used at least four of six basic strategies. They:

- **Figured out their motivation**, which is rooted in their values.
- **Increased their skills.**
- **Enlisted the help of family**, friends and colleagues.
- **Steered clear of social events** and people who might sabotage them.
- **Created an environment** that is conducive to success.
- **Rewarded themselves** for reaching milestones.

So here's how you can apply those strategies: Say your New Year's resolution is to come up with a budget. You may want to determine your motivation, such as having enough money to send your kids to college or pay your mortgage so you can feel secure in future economic storms, Grenny says.

Then you should create an environment that is conducive to success by making it tougher to impulse-spend—for example, by taking your credit cards out of your wallet or canceling them. You could read a book or take a class to increase your financial savvy and reward yourself with a small splurge if you stick with your budget for a month, he says.

If your goal is to exercise more, then you could get a buddy to work out with you; increase your skills by taking a Pilates class or getting some instruction in weight training; figure out an activity you can do close to home such as walking or jogging in your neighborhood; buying a treadmill for your home or joining a nearby gym. You should give yourself a reward if you stick with your exercise program for two weeks, Grenny says.

"If you use at least four of these kinds of strategies in combination, the odds of sticking with your resolution goes up 400%," he says.

- By Nanci Hellmich, USA Today