

Have You Kept Your New Year's Resolution?

- Shanna Smith

It's that time of year again: winter break is a distant memory, you've grown accustomed to writing "2014" on papers, and New Year's Eve is merely a blur of history. This also happens to be the moment of truth of a year-long motivational game. Did you keep up your New Year's Resolution?

The first thing I notice as March kick-starts is I can actually find a parking spot during the crowded hours at the gym. Some people have already fallen to their inevitable laziness. I notice it during conversations too: people are a lot nicer and more truthful in January. Then, as January ends, they forget that they pledged they would treat others the way they want to be treated or be honest no matter the situation.

"I don't know if I've ever kept up my New Year's Resolution, because I've never checked in at the end of the year," a Marblehead High School parent confesses. "I no longer make resolutions because they never work out for me," says another MHS parent. So why do people fail to maintain their New Year's Resolution?

The truth is it's a hard thing to do. It's a lot easier to plan change than to actually change. If the only reason why you are obeying your resolution is that it's your New Year's Resolution, you probably won't be motivated enough to last the whole year. One way to keep up a resolution is to find ways to increase your motivation. Finding multiple reasons why you want to follow your resolution and coming up with various positive results will help with motivation. If you cannot think of enough reasons or results, you should probably come up with a resolution you are more passionate about.

Lack of specificity might also be the issue. If your New Year's Resolution is to "lose weight" or "get in better shape," it might be too broad. Getting in better shape can mean anything from losing five pounds to losing fifty pounds to gaining muscle mass to running a marathon. The more specific you are, the easier it will be to visualize your goal. Thus, you will be more motivated, and it will be easier to tell when you have succeeded.

Short-term resolutions might also be the cause. If you pledge to earn above a B on a math test and you achieve this in February, you will probably be one of those who has all but forgotten his resolution by March. That B might not have even helped your grade point average, if you fell back to your old study habits. Choosing a goal that will take time to achieve, but is not impossible, will increase the chances that you will stick to your resolution.