

wellness

Revolutionise *your resolutions*

This new year, try asking yourself: What do I love? What makes me happy? What challenges me? Then resolve to do the things that will bring you joy

Words: Claire Munnings





Writing down our goals helps to remind us of what we'd like to accomplish, and that our goals need to be achievable, both practically and financially.

The new year can herald a positive change. It's like there's something in the air – a sense of optimism and ambition for what the next few months will bring.

And you may already be planning what it is you're going to accomplish and what you're going to stop doing so much of this January. We do it every year – pledge that this really will be the year we stop eating chocolate biscuits with every cup of tea, cut down our TV consumption or steer clear of alcohol in the week. But as we head into 2020, there's

one thing that you should definitely give up – traditional resolutions.

Research suggests that four out of five people who make resolutions will break them, and that a third are forgotten by the end of the first month. In fact, last year social fitness network Strava pinpointed the second Friday of January as the day in which our motivation starts to falter. So, what is it about resolutions that we struggle with?

"Resolutions often focus on giving something up," explains transformational life coach Jane Bliss Sorrell (janebliss.co.uk). ➤



Jane Bliss Sorrell

Jane is a transformational coach and intuitive life-alignment mentor who is passionate about guiding others to become the master of their own lives. Read more from Jane at janebliss.co.uk

“They tend to be stated in the negative and often refer to ‘quitting’ something, like smoking or drinking or eating too much, and these types of commitments usually go unachieved. Negative resolutions are emotionally unattractive as it’s challenging to focus on taking action towards what we *don’t* want. We are far more likely to be motivated if the negative or ‘loss’ is replaced with a positive gain. By positively framing a resolution, we’re focusing on gaining something or adding something to our life, and our actions are more likely to be aligned with achieving it.”

One way to positively frame our resolutions is to revamp them altogether.


“The difference with bucket-list type goals is that they are like small wins”

Instead of setting yourself up to fail or being too prescriptive with your aims, pledge to do things that are sure to bring fulfilment and joy to your life – sign up for that furniture restoration course, watch those classic films you’ve never seen or cook with some unfamiliar ingredients!

• Deborah Maloney-Marsden is a psychotherapist and leadership coach (deborahmaloney.com). For her, committing to acts that resemble those you would traditionally find on a bucket list, rather than a new year’s resolution inventory, can help us grow and expand.

“The difference with bucket-list type goals is that they are like small wins, which are fantastic for increasing our self-esteem and our resilience,” she says. “They take you out of your comfort zone, challenge you and encourage you to use resources that are often lying dormant.”

Jane agrees, and says that pushing ourselves forward stops us from stagnating in our lives. “Self-growth is key to living a fulfilling life,” she says. “When we’re challenged and pushed out of our comfort zone and learn something new, our self-belief is strengthened and we gain power. It boosts happiness and increases our confidence so we’re better equipped to tackle all sorts of new tasks. Achieving one goal often motivates us to set new challenges and



Pledge to do things that come with a feeling of achievement – like restoring a piece of furniture that you love.

Set achievable goals. For example, 'Read 20 books this year', rather than a vague 'read more'.

continue evolving. Progress is growth and when we grow, we feel alive."

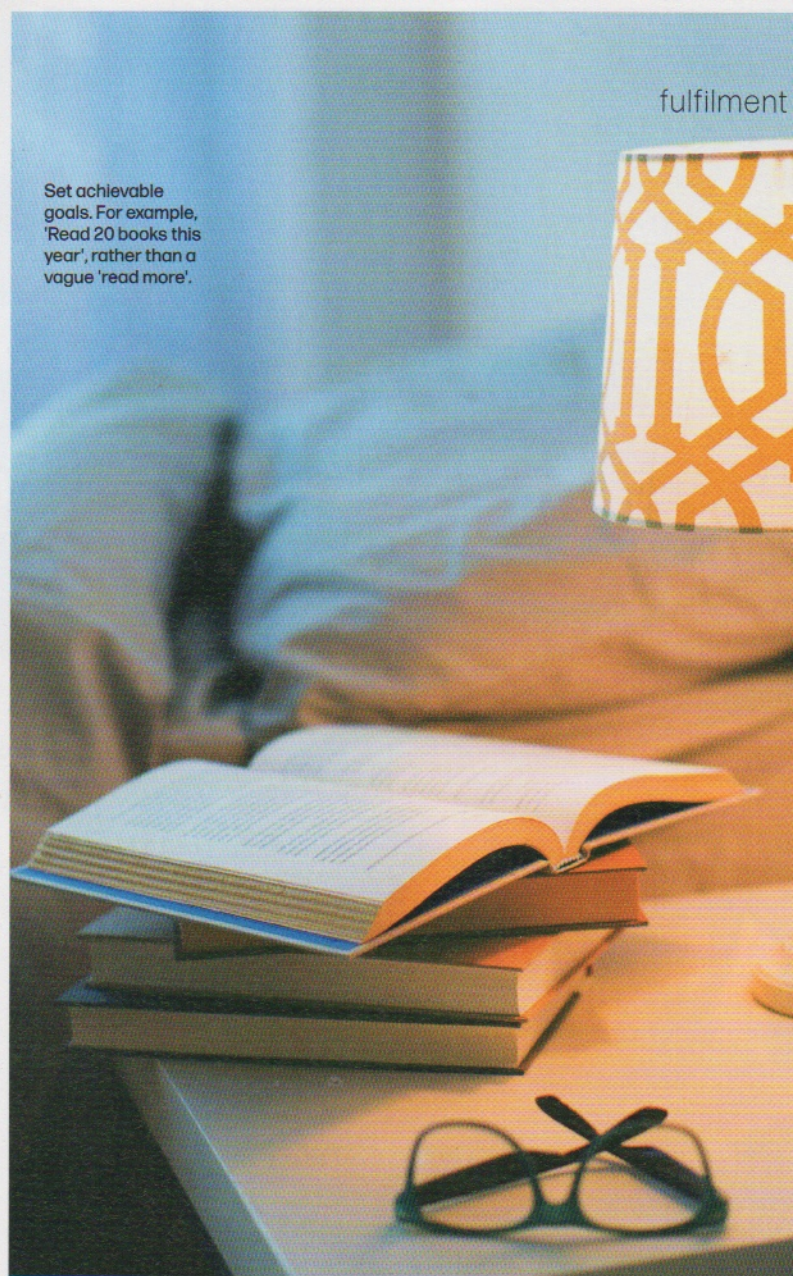
This feeling of being alive is really key – and is part of what forms the peak-end theory so often referenced in discussions about bucket lists. According to the Nobel Prize-winning psychologist Daniel Kahneman, we judge our experiences on how we feel at their peak, and at their end. This means that if life is an experience in itself, we will judge it largely by its peaks. Surely, then, we need to create as many opportunities as possible to achieve these highs – and the right sort of new year's resolutions can help us do this.

Children's author Louise Tribble is someone who decided to revamp her resolutions in 2019. Fed up with constantly feeling like she'd failed at keeping her resolutions, she made the conscious choice to think more mindfully about what she wanted to achieve over this past year.

"Every January I made the same sort of resolutions; usually to eat healthier, exercise more and that kind of thing. They tended to only last a few days, maybe a week at the most, and so I decided that in 2019 I needed to do something that would enrich my life more and improve my happiness levels," she says. Louise's goals included going swimming in the sea, visiting a country she'd never been to before, starting Swedish lessons and reading 20 new books. They may not sound groundbreaking, but they've encouraged her to experience new things and opened her mind up to new possibilities.

"I love resolutions like this because it actually makes you go and do something, instead of always just thinking 'oh yes... one day!'," she explains. "Setting single things as goals is so much more achievable; they are less daunting and much easier to accomplish.

"I think this year has been one of my most productive, and my new way of setting resolutions has actually made a massive impact on my life," she adds. "I wanted to read 20 new books, but I've actually managed around 50! I've also published three books



this year – so I think it's helped me on a creative level too."

What, then, is the key to setting achievable goals that will really inspire you? For Jane, it's important to focus on self-development and look at ideas that marry with your personal values.

"Set resolutions that motivate you," she says. "Make sure that they are important to you and that there is real value in achieving them.

"See your resolutions as a 'goal with intention,'" she adds. "A goal is a destination; it has a tangible future outcome. An intention is more about your inner world; it can be seen as the energy that is held alongside. ➤



Deborah Maloney-Marsden

Deborah is a psychotherapist and leadership coach who works at a deep level to clear blocks and heal trauma, enabling people to live their fullest life. Find her at deborahmaloney.com

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A resolution can be a trip or an experience you've always dreamt of.

Your new goals

Need help writing your list? Deborah has some key advice

- * Think of what you love: Ask yourself, what excites me? What challenges me? What makes my heart sing? It will be different for all of us. We all have a unique way of seeing the world and it's important to choose things that you really want to do.
- * Think big and small: Consider all of the things you want to do - internally and externally. It could be riding a horse, driving around a race track, visiting places that you have wanted to go for a while, starting a book group, cooking for friends or practically anything else.
- * Be kind to yourself: Consider what things may be good for you and your self-care routine - it could be starting therapy, doing a mindfulness course or simply taking space each day to check in with yourself.
- * Turn it up a notch: I always suggest we work to our edges and that we need to look after ourselves while challenging ourselves. So, if you like cooking, maybe host a supper club, which is fun, yet also challenging.



Claire Munnings

Claire is a health and wellbeing journalist interested in helping people find joy in their everyday lives. She enjoys writing about ways that we can reconnect with our intuition and live more mindfully.

For example, if your goal is to do a parachute jump, the intention may be to push through fears, increase self-belief and enjoy every moment of the self-expansion. Setting a specific goal which is supported by authentic intentions is sure to bring more fulfilment and joy to our life."

Practically speaking, you also need to ensure that you can actually do what it is you want to.

"Whatever we put on our lists needs to be achievable, financially and practically," Deborah says. "There's no point in setting resolutions that are too difficult to fulfil. So, sense-check things. Planning properly can help. Do some research, book time off work even, and make sure they fit in and are achievable."

Deborah says that it's also important not to be too prescriptive with the timing of our goal-setting.

"We need to work to our own schedule," she says. "You can make your resolutions whenever you are ready to - or perhaps on a day that means something to you, such as an anniversary or birthday, or simply a day when you wake up super energised! Strike while the iron is hot. Spacing your goals out throughout the year is also important - treat them as gifts to yourself and your self-development."

So, whether you've always wanted to sleep out under the stars, have a go at being a trapeze artist for the day, research your family tree, or enjoy afternoon tea at the Ritz, make this the year that you do it. 🍷