

Live Well Be Well

"Let's Talk: No New Year's Resolutions"

Welcome to Live Well, Be Well! A podcast where we speak candidly about all things health and well-being! My name is Christine Glissmann and I'm a Health Educator in Health Promotion Services here at UC San Diego.

On this episode of Live Well Be Well, we'll be discussing why New Year's Resolutions are unhelpful and don't set you up for success. Tune in to explore alternatives that help increase achievement.

So we hope you get inspired, we hope you feel connected, and we hope you discover new ways to live your best life. Let's get started!

Making New Year's Resolutions has been a consistent practice of mine for years. I sit down and stare at a blank page in my journal, grab a cool gel pen, and list off about 20 things that I would like to improve on this next year. My reasons for writing down New Year's Resolutions is I believe in the power of self-improvement and self-actualization, but also a big chunk of it is probably because I believe that if I make some changes in my life or to myself that I will be happier.

If I look back over the last few years, my list includes things like: "drink more water, read more books, try out a new fitness class, lose body fat, etc." My New Year's Resolutions are health, intellect, and vanity based most of the time. These are not necessarily poor categories, however, the struggle to pursue these year-after-year has opened my eyes to what they or my mindset while writing them lack. Number 1: my happiness is not tied to the next thing..the next body, the next haircut, the next job, the next etc. Number 2: I always seem to write a huge list with the majority of them being extremely vague and because of that quite useless.

"New year, New you" is social catchphrase of each new year. Let me tell you a secret though...You don't have to buy into it. I think our culture distorts self-improvement into a never-ending circle of dissatisfaction. Don't get me wrong, I fall into this pattern, but as I age and take an honest look at my mental health and what I want to feel about my life- I am starting to see the cracks in this philosophy. You will never find happiness if you are always hoping that the next thing is what will add value or make your life better. There is nothing wrong with striving for improvement, however the problem lies in the inability to savor the present..the present you. I encourage you to consider entering the

new year with the mindset of savoring the present and finding satisfaction with what you currently have within and around you. Don't wait on loving yourself.

So, that my first problem with New Year's Resolutions- this never-ending dissatisfaction. The second is that often the list is pages long and broad- with nothing quantifiable, with no ending or beginning- just a bunch of hopes. A better approach is to create SMART goals. Goals are the more defined version of New Year's Resolutions and guess what? They can happen at any time during the year. You don't have to start them all at the same time and actually shouldn't. If you have a list of 20 in front of you the first step is to figure out what is most important to you right now..maybe rank each one on a scale of 1-10, 10 being most important. Then the highest of those can be ranked further by choosing which are the most feasible right now- so this could mean that you have all the necessary resources without having to spend money now. Rank your most important again using a 1-10 feasibility scale. The highest scores are the ones that you can start with first! I recommend only a couple goals at a time. Next, is to figure out a start date for them. After you have some defined times then make the goal as specific as possible, so you can see the progress you have made.. Lastly, be gentle with yourself when you experience setbacks. It is normal to have some slipups- just get back on the horse and remind yourself why you started.

Tritons, I encourage you to not write New Year's Resolutions. Write goals instead and they don't all have to start in January or end in December. Start small- a week at a time and build upon this as your discipline grows. Lastly, let's make 2021 the year where we are satisfied with our present. I personally don't want to live most of my life waiting to really like myself. I can love myself right now in this moment and push myself to achieve goals related to what's most important to me.

Also, remember, you are still living through a global pandemic, so some days the best thing you can do for yourself is to be kind and take a nap.

Closing

So that concludes this episode of Live Well Be Well! If you like what you heard and would like to learn more about topics related to health and well-being, there's much more to come! Be sure to check out our website hps.ucsd.edu and follow us on Instagram and Facebook under @UCSDHPS. Stay tuned for our next episode of Live Well, Be Well.

Until next time, be kind, be true, be you. And remember, to be well is to live well.