

365 chances for victory

Don't give up on your New Year resolutions

By Jeannie Chua

When the end of the year rolls around, resolutions to do better are the order of the day for many of us. The media will, as usual, publicize the big plans of many celebrities. Most of us, however, are not into making plans of global significance – our resolutions tend to centre around our habits and our relationships, such as quitting smoking, giving up alcoholic drinks, being a better mother and wife, etc. We relate better to the shopaholic who's trying to curb her impulsive buying habits than to the politician who is trying to achieve world peace.

For the average woman on the street, therefore, we reproduce below the New Year resolutions of four ordinary women with ordinary needs.

Bridget's Budget

Bridget aims to start 2008 on a tight budget.

Her resolutions are scribbled on the back of a recycled brown bag:



My 2008 Resolutions

Target: earn more; spend less; save, save, save!

- 1. Explore ways of earning extra money — babysitting, petsitting, tutoring, selling quilts...*
- 2. Eat out only on the following occasions:*
 - After a windfall from lottery (highly unlikely as I don't gamble);*
 - When the range, the oven, the microwave oven, the toaster, the BBQ and the electric crockpot all break down at the same time;*
 - When a family member's birthday coincides with a public holiday and pay day.*
- 3. ✗ Cut all credit cards in half; no more buying on credit.*
- 4. Shop for groceries once a week. Buy major items on 10% Tuesdays. Use coupons. Stick to the shopping list.*
- 5. Do not buy something just because it is on sale.*
- 6. No more window shopping at dollar stores! Remember: two loonies add up to a toonie and toonies add up to \$\$\$!*

7. Cancel subscriptions for *Kitchen Delights*, *Living Room Space*, *Bedroom Ideas*, *Fabulous Hair* and *The Pedicure Journal*. Read the back issues that are still in their envelopes. Visit the library for reading material.

8. Cancel TV channels that are channelling away money!

9. Lock savings somewhere where the money is not easily-accessible.

Note to self: While saving money, do not turn into a miser. Remember: Do not make the mistake of depriving those in need while trying not to be cheated by those with greed.

Marissa aims at sainthood

Marissa, a stay-at-home mom, manages to scribble her New Year resolutions on the grocery list on her fridge in between checking the roast in the oven and whipping the potatoes:



~~My Shopping List~~



New Year Resolutions for 2008

1. When I've prepared what I consider to be the best meal ever, and all my husband says is: "Where's the ketchup?," I will ignore the insensitivity and maintain my good mood throughout dinner.

2. At the end of a day, when I'm really tired and grouchy and my three-year-old holds up her storybook and looks at me with wide, expectant eyes, I will cheerfully read her a story and treasure these opportunities for bonding before they disappear all too quickly.

3. When my teenager confesses a wrong-doing, I will hold onto my temptation to scream; and instead of saying something I will later regret, I will utter a sincere forgiving message, I must remember that each utterance from me can serve as either a block towards building a trusting relationship, or a piece of ore towards the making of a wrecking ball of mistrust and bitterness.

4. When my husband forgets my birthday or our anniversary, I will refrain from hinting to him about the flowers Tom picked for his wife or the poem Harry penned for his, but I will remember the many things he does the other 364 days.

5. When my neighbour's tree sheds its leaves into my yard, I will avoid misapplying the verse "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's"; instead, I will be thankful for the gift of fertilizers for my flower beds, and I will say a word of blessing for her when my flowers bloom.

No more puffs for Chelsea Chimney

Law student Chelsea has resolved to start 2008 with a big “BAN” – on cigarettes. After manoeuvring your way out of her complex language, you might get some tips on quitting smoking.

Anti-Puff Document 2008

- 1.1 I, Chelsea S. Chimney, hereinafter known as “the incumbent”, hereby do solemnly declare that from the first day of the first month of the year two thousand and eight, I, having made the decision to quit smoking, hereinafter known as “the habit,” will make every effort to qualify as a candidate of the smoke-free sect. I testify that the quitting of the habit, hereinafter known as the “action plan,” is entirely voluntary on my part, and that I have not been coerced, nagged, or otherwise persuaded into this aforementioned plan by parties external to myself.
- 1.2 The following represents components of the action plan:
 - 1.2.1 The incumbent will not acquire (through purchase, begging, borrowing, stealing or other means) any amount of cigarettes (hereinafter known as “the product”) with the exception of the special case as spelt out in 1.2.7 below.
 - 1.2.2 Prior to the legal commencement date, the incumbent will dispose of all existing stocks of the product and its related peripherals (including, but not limited to, lighters, matches, and ash-trays.)
 - 1.2.3 The incumbent is to identify situations, places and people who work against the action plan, and avoid these factors in so far as it is possible.
 - 1.2.4 The incumbent is well aware that the deprivation of the product will in the initial stages lead to withdrawal symptoms including feelings of irritability, headaches, dizziness, fatigue, sore throat and tightness in the chest, and will attempt to counter these symptoms with the drinking of water, distraction, delay tactics, rest, activities, and positive thinking.
 - 1.2.5 In extreme cases of cravings for nicotine, the incumbent is allowed to use nicotine gum or nicotine patch as an alternative, but not before exhausting other ideas as listed in 1.2.4, or using non-nicotine alternatives such as normal chewing gum, candy and chocolates.
 - 1.2.6 Upon the failure of steps 1.2.4. and 1.2.5, the incumbent is also to engage in self scare tactics to enforce the action plan, including imagining her five-year-old crying by her death-bed while she gasps for air; and picturing her old mother having to lug a heavy oxygen tank wherever she goes, due to the inhalation of second-hand smoke all these years.
 - 1.2.7 In extreme cases of cravings, the incumbent is to avoid the temptation of starting the first puff at all costs, failing which the incumbent must only acquire one pack of the product of the brand that the incumbent enjoys the least.
 - 1.2.8 The incumbent is to engage the help of external parties including, but not limited to, a “quit buddy” (defined as a friend who is willing to be a participating partner of this action plan) and smoking cessation clinics.
- 1.3 The incumbent is to note that similar action plans taken by other parties have usually succeeded only at the third or fourth attempt and must therefore never give up, no matter what. Notwithstanding that the legal commencement date of the action plan is Jan 1, 2008, it is envisioned that the incumbent will be allowed as many attempts within the year of 2008 to reactivate the action plan as is necessary to be completely acquitted of the habit, provided always that the incumbent takes every possible step and depletes all available resources to ensure the success of the action plan.

Signed and sealed this 31st day of December, 2007

CHELSEA S. CHIMNEY

Less sloppiness for Joey

Joey's typewritten list may not look impressive, but with her sincerity and determined attitude, she may well become the model worker of the year in 2008.

JOEY's new years revolutions 20078

1. I will not be messy. I will be neat in my work.
2. I will strife for 10o% inaccuracy my work
3. I will use Spellchek and the dictionery.
4. i will be using good grammar's: and, punctuation.
5. I will check my wok b4 I hang it onto my boss.

Oscar Wilde once observed that “good resolutions are simply checks that men [and women] draw on a bank where they have no account.” Indeed, when it comes to keeping resolutions, the heart is usually willing but the flesh is weak.

Below are some pointers on keeping your New Year resolutions:

- Be sincere about your commitment;
- Be prepared to make sacrifices;
- Avoid the mentality of 'just once wouldn't hurt' when it comes to quitting a bad habit;
- Don't see your old habit as a “security blanket” – instead, liberate yourself to a new lifestyle;
- Don't underplay the consequences of a bad habit;
- Don't expect to attain victory without struggle;
- Don't give up when you fail after a few attempts;
- Don't let other people's behaviour dictate your actions.

Keeping a resolution is like climbing into a boat that will take you to a new coast of victory. Many people see January 1 as a special day to get into this boat, and if they fail to get in or happen to fall off it halfway, they simply do not try again. They do not realize that the boat always comes again. Think of 2008 as a year when the boat is going to come every day – so, even if you fail to stay on course after the first day, or after a month or two, don't give up. Remember: there are 365 chances of attaining victory in 2008.