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"THE RESOLUTION THAT CHANGED MY LIFE"

Five Australian health experts reveal the new year's promise that set them on a new path. By Kris Franken

"I COMMITTED TO A DAILY FIVE-MINUTE MEDITATION"

Crawf Weir, yoga instructor and founder of Barefoot Yoga

My resolution: I chose to start meditating last year because I'd wake up thinking about the things I'd dreamt of and would then start planning my day without any break. I felt a need to silence my mind before charging off and doing stuff. Five minutes a day was easy; giving up the resistance to sit was not. Every day, I'd get up, shower, brush my teeth and then sit and meditate.

How I simplified my meditation:

I use a counting technique to centre the mind. I sit comfortably with my back straight and eyes closed, and count backwards from 50 to zero, synchronising the numbers with my inhalation and exhalation. When I've finished, I breathe naturally, aware of how peaceful, energised and calm I am.

How it's changed my life:

I've felt more at peace with myself and better able to deal with life's challenges. Meditation clears my mind and helps me be more responsive and less reactive.

"I SET A REGULAR YOGA PRACTICE"

Claire Obeid, holistic health coach of The Wellness Project

About my resolution: Years ago, I tried to go from one yoga session a week to five a week. It didn't work. In 2008, I added one class every three weeks and within three months, I was practising six days a week and it felt completely natural.

How I motivate myself: When I wake up, I have a rule that I always apply: Start moving, don't think. I wake with the sunrise and switch off all those self-sabotaging voices that try to convince me that my bed is the best place to be.

How it's changed my life: The positive changes to my body are improved strength, flexibility and stamina, plus it transformed the way I feel about myself. Yoga delivers clarity, connection and creativity like nothing else. I've noticed I now move through challenging situations with ease, an inquisitive mind and an eagerness to discover the lesson within.

HOW TO MAKE A LASTING RESOLUTION

"Work towards, not away from something. Make it amazing." **Lutz**

"Avoid setting too many boundaries, time-limits and expectations." **Obeid**

"Make one resolution that strengthens something that makes you feel good and another resolution that lets go of something that depletes you." **Weir**

"Take small, realistic steps towards the direction of your desire." **Kerr**

"Choose something fun." **Lynton**

"I PUT THE FUN BACK INTO EXERCISE"

Leila Lutz, personal trainer at Momentum for Life

About my resolution: I was feeling stuck in an old fitness routine, so in 2013 I took up weekly AcroYoga (acrobatics with yoga and meditation) and gymnastics classes. Suddenly, exercise was about more than the aesthetics and energy burn.

How I made it work: It wasn't easy to stick with – there were hour-long drives to get there and two-hour training sessions – so I joined with a buddy. Besides the incentive of not letting them down, I looked forward to catching up with them in person.

How it's changed my life: Meeting new people, committing to exercises that are out of my comfort zone and feeling excited have had a ripple effect in the rest of my life. In challenging myself and learning to trust others, I found my love of training again.

"I FOLLOWED MY HEART"

Lynda Kerr, founder of The Reiki and Meditation Project

About my resolution: I'd had enough of the long hours in the financial planning and travel industries and always doing what other people thought I should, so in 1998 I embarked on a diploma of health science in beauty. Becoming a Reiki instructor is the best resolution I've ever made, but it came slowly because I took time to really listen to my quiet inner voice.

How I learnt self-care: This is essential to living in a state of balance and wellbeing – an empty vessel has nothing to offer. Reiki has been a soothing balm in times of turmoil.

How it's changed my life: Since I started living in a way that's more congruent with my values, I've become more balanced and happy. Reiki has been the platform to deep and lasting transformation in all areas of my life and it's had a profound effect on those around me.

"I MADE A BUCKET LIST"

Chris Lynton, nutritionist

About my resolution: I'd read about someone's 100-task bucket list and how they felt liberated by breaking the boredom of the comfort zone. So in 2011, I wrote a list of 12 resolutions – one a month – that were challenging, achievable and made sense.

How I made it inspiring: I made sure three of the resolutions were crazy (I learnt to speak French and play the ukulele, and quit alcohol for a month) and one was a big dream (skydiving). I posted the list everywhere and told family and friends so I had internal and external cues.

How it's changed my life: Ticking off the list has improved my happiness, relationships and outlook on what I could do. It was empowering and a fun way of setting goals.



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