

Make New Year's resolutions you know you can keep

Senior Beat

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The new year is here. Traditionally, it's a time when we make great big plans to get in shape mentally and physically.

Well, with years of broken resolutions behind me, I'm finally starting to get over the grandiose schemes of major and immediate life change. I suggest a much smaller scale, taking things slowly, and easily all the while hoping the little lifestyle changes stick.

Let's think about losing weight and getting stronger and in better shape, which is always at the top of the resolutions chart.

Eastern Maine Development Corp. names six 2015 Bangor region Champions

On Thursday, Dec. 17, Eastern Maine Development Corp. honored its 2015 Champions, those individuals or businesses who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to not only support the mission of EMDC but also make this region and better place to live and work.

Eastern Maine Community College

EMCC has supported EMDC's workforce programs and customers throughout 2015. EMCC had previously recognized the need for fine woodworkers to fulfill needs in the boat building industry, and had partnered with Hinckley Yachts to build a comprehensive two year curriculum for fine woodworking. When EMDC approached the school about creating a compressed course to not only accommodate the immediate hiring needs of the boat building industry, but also to address the need to gain essential skills quicker than two years and then enable displaced workers to enter or re-enter the labor market quickly, they responded positively. EMCC agreed to offer the program again this year, which began last month.

Pulse Marketing

Pulse Marketing owner Cintia Miranda has committed herself to her community in so many ways. She served for 3 years as the chair of the Downeast Chapter of SCORE. In Bangor, she volunteered her company to be a work experience site for EMDC's Youthforce Program, providing invaluable experience to a young person, offering them guidance and mentoring as they entered their first employment opportunity. Now Cintia is the new chair of the Bangor SCORE organization; helping to shape and build this volunteer organization so it might continue the work of assisting those new entrepreneurs.

Evan Richert

Evan Richert, planner for the town of Orono and a Maine state economist, was a critical partner of the Re-Engineering the Region project. Evan took an analysis performed by USM's Charles Colgan and dug deeper into the data to uncover the Bangor Region's competitive economic sectors. Working on behalf of the Bangor Region Development Alliance, the Action Committee of 50 and EMDC, Richert's analysis identified sectors and sub-sectors of industry having the potential for growth. This analysis was the baseline that helped identify opportunities for growth and revitalization. Throughout the project, Evan has been an active and vocal participant, particularly through his help with convening the two-day roundtable sessions of business and industry experts, and was instrumental in bringing the project to a successful conclusion.

Hinckley Yachts

During 2015, Hinckley Yachts has demonstrated an on-going commitment to EMDC's workforce programs. Beginning in late 2014, Hinckley was the key contributor to curriculum development for the Fine

This is tough for an all or nothing gal like me, but here goes: Instead of pledging to exercise everyday and giving up all those "bad" foods, how about promising to add a couple of servings of fruit or vegetables to your daily diet? Blueberries on cereal, bananas and peanut butter on toast, or a glass of orange juice are all easily doable. Once a firm habit is established, add a few more things such as vegetables on sandwiches, or thrown in sauces and soups.

Planning to exercise everyday if you're not used to it is an exercise in frustration. Trust me on this one. However, starting a fitness program by doing two 10 minute sessions on most days of the week is easy enough, and can turn into exercising every day for 30 to 60 minutes in no time.

And let's not forget

water. If you're not a heavy water drinker, six to eight glasses a day, which is the often recommended amount, may seem impossible. Think about drinking a glass before each meal and at snack time. Other fluids count too, so have some skim milk and juice along with your water.

Quitting smoking is another popular resolution and a tough one. Pledging to never smoke another cigarette again is a lofty goal and may work for some people. But quitting is hard and sometimes phasing out a habit is easier than going cold turkey. While everyone who smokes should stop, how to quit is a very personal decision. Talk to your doctor who can help. There are many products on the market to make your dream of being quitting a reality.

And for those of you

who think I'm just blowing smoke, I am not. I myself quit a pack-a-day habit 17 years ago and I won't lie to you, it was hard. But it can be done and I am the better for it.

Here are some other resolutions which may help make your new year better:

- Don't underestimate the power of laughter. Laughing at yourself and not taking things too seriously can make you happier in the long run, while making you feel calmer and more peaceful. Laughter has always been thought to be the best medicine.

- Make surrounding yourself with positive, and encouraging people a priority. Enthusiasm is contagious.

- Happiness thy name is gratitude. Nothing will make you happier than being grateful for all you have. Positive attitudes

beget positive energy. Making a list of things to be grateful for can shine light on your personal joy. I'll start. I am grateful that you are a loyal reader of Senior Beat. I feel privileged to be able to talk to you each week.

- Take your medication as your doctor ordered. Ask questions if you don't understand something your medical provider said.

- Learn about depression. If you exhibit any symptoms at all, call your doctor. Depression is treatable so pledge to seek help if necessary.

- Prevent falls by removing scatter rugs, making sure stairways are well lit and keeping pathways clear.

- Learn or do something new. Take a class, maybe one from Senior College, sing in a chorus or church choir, find a hobby, or volunteer some of your

time. This could be your year to make a difference.

And one last resolution to think about. Be good to yourself every day. Treat yourself as you would your best friend. You deserve it.

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