GBS HEALTH & WELLNESS

Clinical Corner

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The New Year is upon us and for many this time of year marks the tradition of New Year's resolutions. Every January 1st 40 percent of Americans resolve to improve their health, relationships or financial situations. However, despite our best intentions, after a few months our resolutions are long forgotten. One study from the University of Scranton followed 200 people who made New Years' resolutions and only 19 percent deemed themselves successful. Pretty bad odds, right? Not all is lost, and I have some good news to help you successfully accomplish your goals. This year, I challenge you to take a different approach to your resolutions and use some of the tools behavioral change scientists have proven to be successful.

› Setting goals during a perceived time of a "fresh start" such as the beginning of the week, birthday or new year is a great start. However, people who are successful at meeting their goals re-commit to them weekly. This year, set your goal and then once a week evaluate your progress. If you were not as successful as you hoped, reassess and adjust accordingly. Change can be difficult and is not always a linear path.

There will likely be ups and downs along the way. Have grace with yourself and embrace the journey to self-improvement.

› Set goals that are realistic. If the goal you would like to accomplish is overwhelming, break it up into achievable steps.

› Bundle your goals. If you set a goal to exercise but dread it everyday try pairing it with an activity you enjoy. For example, walk on the treadmill while watching your favorite T.V. show. Or listen to your favorite podcast while walking outside.

› Make a game out of your goals. Set mini milestones and each time you reach them give yourself a prize.

› Recruit others in your community that have similar goals for support and accountability.

Resources
National Library of Medicine; Auld Lang Syne
Katy Milkman; How to Change