

New Year's Resolutions - 14 hours and counting

New year's day. This is the first day of the new me. Embarrassed by my self indulgent behavior and reckless lifestyle of the past year or more, I have turned over a new leaf. I have made a number of resolutions and have been quite successful in living up to most of them for the past 12 hours (seven of which were spent sleeping).

Resolution #1 Stick to my diet

This is an easy resolution to make but a difficult one to carry out. I make it every year and each year I end up looking more and more like Rob Ford – except older and not so cheerful. It is not that I lack knowledge. I just completed a cardiac rehabilitation program and know all about calories, fibre and oxy-thing-a-ma-jigs. This time I am serious about losing weight. I intend to set targets and imagine a future where I can do up my suit jacket, tie my shoelaces without the risk of blacking out and not be afraid of seeing myself naked in the bathroom mirror.

Resolution #2 Listen to my wife

This is a “must do” or my 2016 resolution will be to find a good divorce lawyer or buy a hearing aid or both. I blame retirement. My former work world had structure and discipline. There were big penalties for a failure to listen to the boss which could result in a stern reprimand, a loss of performance pay, and a parking space next to the biomedical waste dumpster. These days I only risk the severe reprimand which, of course, would be an even more hideous and humiliating experience if I actually listened. On the other hand, if I really focus and concentrate on what my lovely life partner is saying, then she will not need to repeat herself or wonder why I haven't done what she thought I should do in the way she wanted it done. Life will be better for both of us.

Resolution #3 Be positive.

The problem with getting older is having to deal with so much change. One tempting way to handle any new situation is to respond according to true and trusted customs and mores from an earlier and seemingly happier time such as, say, 1973. This allows you to start almost any conversation with the clause “In my day ...” leading to such revelations as, “In my day we didn’t have i-Pads and we used to talk to people on pay phones and yell down the hall a lot,” or, “In my day we had porridge for breakfast and only ate bananas on special occasions such as the Queen’s birthday or a Robert Stanfield fundraiser.” As a result, people often think that I am dwelling in the past and am kind of negative about our current world.

So hold on. I am putting away my wide ties and Fortrel leisure suits and am going to start all future conversations with the clause, “Isn’t it wonderful that” leading to such positive thoughts as, “Isn’t it wonderful that I now have the freedom to pump my own gas and bag my own groceries!” and “ Isn’t it wonderful that the lawyer’s receptionist can stick safety pins through her cheeks and have snake tattoos curling around her arms without being self-conscious!”

Resolution #4 Become more technologically literate

My children are muttering more and more about the growing amount of time that they have to spend helping me to computer-scan old photographs for my family history research, program the DVD player and open soup cans with that fancy new can opener thing-a-ma-jig. I am going to take a course. I hear that the Apple Store is good at training older people to use state of the art thing-a-ma-jigs. There must be learning courses entitled “ Computer training for complete idiots” or “ Technology coping skills for people who have been in prison since 1956”. My only fear is that such courses are only offered on-line which will mean that I will need my kids to help me go on-line.

Resolution #5 Listen to the sermon

This is a close cousin to Resolution #2 above. Our Minister gives wonderful sermons (or so I am told). Each Sunday Reverend Koots walks down from the pulpit, looks sternly out over our church congregation, and delivers a humdinger of a sermon. He speaks clearly and well. His sermons often contain good anecdotes that illustrate the theme of his talk. My wife sometimes sits in the choir for both morning worship services and will ask me what I thought about the sermon.

This is where it gets tricky, because I spend much of my time in church daydreaming. When other members of the congregation are being inspired, my mind is floating aimlessly and flitting from random thought to random thought. When Audrey asks me about the sermon, all I can recall are disjointed words such as 'Jesus', 'palm leaves', 'tax collectors' and 'trees'. It is the exact same experience that I had 45 years ago in my university computer science class.

The point is that I am getting older, and every day there is a growing chance that I will be confronting St Peter, so I need to cram for my final exam.

So there you have it: five simple resolutions which, if carried out over the coming year, will transform me into a better human being. I have the potential to become thinner, more communicative with my life partner, more positive about change, better on the computer and less of a spiritual amnesiac.

Things are looking good. I am now almost 14 hours into the New Year and am still on track with at least three of my resolutions! Happy New Year to all!