

Create Your Personal Manifesto in 25 Minutes

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As the new year approaches, many people commit to exercising more, not drinking alcohol, eating healthier and paying more attention to sleep. I also like to make big work goals, plan trips and have plans to get fit.

But in less than ten days, those plans usually fail and I return to my old habits until the next January rolls around.

I stopped making New Year's resolutions a few years back, despite looking into the science of how to make them stick. Now, I have a strategy for creating a personal manifesto inspired by the work of designer Ayse Birsel.

Read more: [8 Ways You Can Use Science to Make Your Resolutions Stick](#)

New Year's resolutions fail

We already know that less than 10% of New Year's resolutions stick. Successful people commit to simple resolutions. Arianna Huffington wants to restore her sense of wonder. Hubspot CEO Bryan Halligan wants to nap and meditate more. Billionaire serial entrepreneur Fred Mouawad intends to keep more of his time unscheduled to dream more and leave time to innovate. Mark Cuban resolves to play more.

It seems most successful people lean into more time off work, more playtime, more family and fun time.

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Habits are hard to change

James Clear's research on habits shows why habits are so hard to change. According to the author, the five big reasons are trying to change everything at once, shooting for habits too big to change, seeking a result and not a ritual, not changing your environment and assuming that small changes don't add up.

You can get better, even if just get better by 1% each day – it's still a habit change.

What if, instead of focusing on habits, we change how we think about New Year's resolutions and think like a designer instead to design a sustainable manifesto.

Write your manifesto in 25 minutes

Designer Ayse Birsel recommends that you take 25 minutes and sit alone or with your team and do this little exercise. I have modified it from her framework to work for leaders and entrepreneurs who want to create sustainable success without sacrifices by creating life, work, and play effortlessly.

Here are three steps you can take to create your manifesto.

Step 1: Unlearn

Sit for 25 min in a place where you won't get distracted. It's good to do this sometimes early in the year. You can use my manifesto as a template.

1. Start with the heart.

What feelings and emotions do you want to keep from last year,

and what do you want to let go of?

2. What Worked Well?

What worked well last year that's worth pursuing this year? List all accomplishments, successes and big wins.

3. What Didn't Work?

What can you let go of, simplify, remove, delete, ignore or change in the new year without being too judgemental here?

4. What obstacles hold you back from stepping into your full human potential?

Be honest with yourself. What holds you back that you're in control of? Then, list only the things you control.

5. Express gratitude.

What are you grateful for? According to Harvard Health, gratitude contributes to overall well-being. The word gratitude is derived from the Latin word *gratia*, which means grace. Expressing gratitude can help you connect with yourself, others, nature or a higher power.

6. Joy.

What brings you joy in day to day that can keep you optimistic and motivated to keep going forward, find time for yourself and do what you love.

Now that you have everything, time underline the things that resonate with you the most – focus on the essentials here.

Step 2: Relearn

Take time to reflect on the year, and ask yourself how to design new experiences. When in doubt, always go with your gut.

1. What big dreams are worth imagining?
2. If fear was no object, what would you do?
3. What's the cost of not doing it?
4. What if it was easy?

Step 3: Write your manifesto.

It's time to put it all together with a pretty bow on top so you can refer to it daily.

Your manifesto = Life + Work + Play

Now that you have your manifesto share it with your family and friends (it adds accountability). You can do the exercise with your team and share goals, obstacles and dreams.

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