

Did You Make Your New Year's Revolution?

by Marc H. Rudov

One of the funniest sights to me is the throng of out-of-shape couch potatoes at the gym on New Year's Day. Why? Because this unusual uptick in attendance always makes New Year's Day the gym's busiest day of the year. Now, don't get me wrong: I want to commend and support these temporary escapees from Sedentary Prison, because they *are* making the effort. But, having been a gym rat for most of my life, from years of observation and discussions with gym managers, I know these folks are just uncommitted talkers who, the previous day, made a new year's resolution to become physically fit. I laugh because I know these pretenders will be gone by the end of January, back in front of their televisions.

This one-month membership at the gym is the most visible example, but the cycle of thinking/trying/quitting pervades the lives of most people. I've heard many people say, ad nauseam, "This year, I've made a new year's resolution to find a soulmate, break off a horrible relationship, quit smoking, whatever." But, then, the desired outcome doesn't happen. Unfortunately, most people throw up their hands and vow to try again the following year. The times I've been guilty of not following through on my goals have pissed me off; that's the way it should be.

In our culture, there is so much focus on unfulfilled new year's resolutions that Dr. Phil is getting into the act by launching 2005 with "Resolution Week: How to Make Your New Year's Resolutions a Reality." But, I know that Dr. Phil can't help his guests unless he personally intervenes in their lives—a huge commitment on his part. And, so, as I was sweating on the stairclimber, it finally dawned on me why so many of us succumb to this annual ritual of short-term, unfulfilled ambition: on December 31st, we use the wrong word—resolution—to effect changes in our lives. Instead, we should use *revolution*. A resolution is an intention or a determination—a force existing only in one's mind. *Revolution*, on the other hand, means complete and forcible overthrow, radical and pervasive change—in other words, taking massive action

to reverse a current situation. A revolution, by definition, occurs outside the mind, on the ground, requiring physical action, dogged perseverance, and sacrifice.

What a difference one letter makes, a “v” (in revolution) versus an “s” (in resolution). Is it a coincidence that **s** is the first letter of sleep, **v** the first letter of victory? Ponder that one! It is not surprising, then, that, if you make a resolution to get into shape, you’ll continue hating your visage in the mirror. You need a *revolution*. A resolution is anemic, impotent. The typical attitude about a resolution is, If it happens, it happens; if it doesn’t, hey, I gave it a shot. With revolution, however, victory is the *only* conceivable outcome; failure must be painful. People often pay with their lives in revolutions. We in the USA are fortunate that Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, George Washington, et al did not suggest attempting the American *Resolution* of 1776. If they had, we would be British subjects today.

At the closing of 2004, Fox News asked me to comment on the lonely experiences of unattached singles on New Year’s Eve. I indicated that this singular holiday is “a traditional, natural time of reflection.” It is painful to be alone when taking inventory of one’s life and contemplating one’s future. Yet, so many people *talk* about getting off the single merry-go-round but take little action. Why? Fortunately, we have moved away from the time when society pressured us to get married. Unfortunately, we have moved toward a Hollywood-driven culture in which we are socialized to do whatever makes us feel good (at the moment). We are brainwashed to think that perpetual singledom and parenting without marriage are cool life choices. Well, if those lifestyles are so cool, why are hordes of their adherents writing to me, telling me how miserable they are? Because, beyond a reasonable point, being single sucks. It is unfulfilling and lacking in meaning.

As we age beyond 35, finding a soulmate becomes ever-more difficult. We become settled in our ways and extremely busy. Additionally, because we have been single so long, we don’t feel like being anything else. I recently read that 33% of American men and 25% of American women, between the ages of 30 and 34, have never been married. That’s a lot of singles! According to the readers’ letters I receive and the Google searches that bring people to my Website, men

and women are having difficulty understanding the rationale of getting married. I believe this is mostly because women are achieving so much professionally and financially.

According to the Federal Reserve Board, women control 51% of America's personal wealth. And, consultant TrendSightGroup claims that women decide 92% of vacation plans, 62% of car purchases, and 52% of home-improvement projects. Those statistics demonstrate that women have lots of power and little to whine about in this country. Yet, too many men and women still think the primary reason for getting married is to provide for and be provided for, respectively—instead of to share love and companionship. One guy recently wrote to me, totally confused, because he got involved with a financially independent woman who valued him for his companionship—she didn't need any financial support. He literally didn't know how to handle it, feeling demeaned and emasculated. Demeaned and emasculated! I pointed out to him how lucky he was. Alas, it was too late: the woman left him for another man who didn't need to be a provider to feel manly.

Mass confusion abounds about the roles of men and women. It is no wonder, then, that the national divorce rate hovers around 50%, for those who take the plunge, and the risk-averse continue to seek “noncommittal” shelter on high ground. My book, *The Man's No-Nonsense Guide to Women: How to Succeed in Romance on Planet Earth*, teaches men and women to remove their gender-based layers of socialization, if they expect to live in harmony. But, such a lifestyle-altering transformation takes monumental change—a *revolution*—not the tepid comfort of a resolution. Regrettably, few have the courage or conviction to start a revolution—to change what they've been taught since birth, even though they know it will improve their lives.

Newton's First Law of Motion states that objects at rest tend to stay at rest; objects in motion tend to stay in motion—unless a force exceeding that which is keeping them at rest or in motion acts upon these objects. To me, Sir Isaac Newton was the first relationship counselor, and he knew a lot about resolution vs. revolution. In metaphorically borrowing from Newton's law of inertia, we learn that people stuck in the proverbial mud (objects at rest) are most likely to stay stuck in the mud, and people whose lives are humming

along (objects in motion) are most likely to keep on humming along. Whether unhappy because you're still single or still "stuck" in a dissatisfying relationship, you are an object at rest. Now, what will you do about it?

Only excessive force—a *revolution*—will create the massive upheaval needed to knock you out of your inertia, your rut. The question is, Are you willing to apply that force, to pay that price, to get what you really want? Do you know what you really want? If all you did at the end of 2004 was make a resolution, equal to doing nothing, your next New Year's Day will look remarkably similar to this one—except you WILL be one year older.

As we saw earlier in this article, the difference between revolution and resolution is one letter—a v instead of an s—small phonetically but HUGE in connotation. Subtle to the eye, huge to the soul. So, as you reflect on each resolution you made this past New Year's Eve, convert the s into a v. Transform each resolution into a powerful, empowering revolution. Otherwise, it is nothing more than a mental exercise. It's OK not to fulfill a resolution. On the other hand, it is gut-wrenching to fail in your revolution. Revolutions change the world; resolutions occupy space in your head. Remember that sometimes it takes only a single, purposeful action to change immeasurably the rest of your life. On the next New Year's Eve, your resolution should be: No more resolutions! Make only revolutions.

About the Author

Marc H. Rudov is an investment banker and business consultant residing in Silicon Valley, California. He is the author of the book ***The Man's No-Nonsense Guide to Women: How to Succeed in Romance on Planet Earth™*** (ISBN 0974501719) and four other articles: "Five Myths About Women," "The Golden Rule Dictates Your Sex Life," "How Every Man Can Land His Dream Woman," and "Can Men and Women Really Get Along?" He also operates an online-dating service called *NoNonsenseDating*.

Rudov's book, articles, and dating service are available at www.NoNonsenseDating.com

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