

12 Fail-Proof Ways to Strengthen Your Resolve

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'There is no chance, no destiny, no fate, that can circumvent or hinder or control the firm resolve of a determined soul.' ~Ella Wheeler Wilcox

You want to lose weight, but you keep eating poorly.

You know you need to exercise, but you just can't seem to get moving.

You'd like to start that project, but maybe you'll do it tomorrow when you aren't so tired.

Our dreams and good intentions are powerful, real, and hold the promise of a happier life, a better you, a sense of pride and accomplishment. But when the rubber meets the road, when it's time to take action, it feels like you are wading waist-high in water with weights tied to your feet. Your heart is willing, but your mind and body resist. The mental difficulty of even the smallest actions can be shocking and immensely disappointing.

If you have intended with all of your heart to create a good habit, drop a bad one, fulfill a goal, or complete a project, and you have failed at it, you are not alone. Nearly everyone has difficulty maintaining resolve and following through. Even those who are self-disciplined weren't born that way. It is a learned skill — one that takes practice and the specific knowledge of how to go about it.

When you become a master at launching but a failure at completion, self-esteem inevitably plummets.

Thoughts like, "I'm weak, I'm lazy, this is too hard for me," often creep in to poison your confidence and further weaken your resolve. To save face, perhaps you create excuses — you're too busy, you aren't feeling well, you don't really need to change. All of this behavior is smoke and mirrors, an attempt by your psyche to keep you comfortably ensconced in inertia and the status quo.

It is as though there are two people inside of you. There's the one who wants things comfortable, easy, uncomplicated, immediately satisfying, and unchanging. But then there's the other you — the one who won't allow the first to be satisfied with the status quo. It's the "potential you" who continues to attempt positive change, growth, and life betterment. These two are in a constant battle, with the "status quo you" coming out on top more often than not.

So how does one strengthen the "potential you" with the resolve to conquer the status quo? How does one get over the hump of resistance, inertia, and discomfort that is the standard response to anything new and hard?

You know it can be done, because you've seen others do it. Unless you have a mental or physical handicap, your circumstances and difficulties are no different than anyone's.

If you aren't following through to create a habit, accomplish a goal, and complete a task, there are really only three things standing in your way.

1. Lack of desire. You may say you want something, but you don't want it badly enough to deal with the discomforts and inconvenience of getting it.

2. Lack of honesty. You are not being real with yourself about your desire for this accomplishment. You aren't accepting 100% personal responsibility for making this happen. Everything is a choice — your choice.

3. Lack of information. You don't have the practical information or skills to overcome resistance and follow through consistently.

Each of these roadblocks can be overcome, allowing you to strengthen your resolve to accomplish just about anything your mind and body are capable of accomplishing. Here are 12 strategies for doing just that:

1. Do your research. Before you begin any new habit or goal, give yourself several days to know exactly what's involved in making this change happen. How much time will it take? How will you insert it into your day? Who else will it impact and how will you deal with them? What special equipment or information will you need? What preparation is necessary? What must you give up to make this happen? How will it impact your life once you've accomplished it?

2. Make an honest decision. Armed with the knowledge from your research, make an informed and honest choice. Are you willing to do the work involved in making this thing happen? Will the outcome be worth the effort? It's hard to know for sure until you start taking action, but you should have some idea of what to expect before you charge ahead.

3. Reduce overwhelm. If the goal or habit seems daunting, it will quash your desire to work hard for it. Break it down into small, simple, and brief actions or tasks. Make it so easy to do that it doesn't feel like a chore. With a new habit, start with five minutes a day, every day — slowly increasing your time over several weeks.

4. Make a public promise. Tell people what you are doing. Announce it to friends, family, on Facebook and Twitter. When you go public with your intentions, it immediately strengthens your resolve. A public commitment shifts your own thinking about your seriousness. No one wants to be embarrassed in front of others.

5. Set up regular accountability. Create a system of accountability so that you can report your actions, successes and failures, every day. This may be a friend or it could be on Facebook or in a forum of some kind. Don't just announce it once and then disappear. Let the world know about your progress.

6. Expect difficulties. There will be life situations that might try to get in the way of your efforts. And it is so easy to allow them to undermine your work. Think in advance of possible problems that might arise and decide how you will deal with these situations. Decide in advance what you will allow to interrupt your work and stick to the plan.

7. Use positive self-talk. When you want to quit, your mind starts reaching for excuses and reasons to give you an exit ramp from the work you are doing. Be aware of your mind's efforts to sabotage you, and intentionally begin saying supportive and positive things to yourself the minute you feel mental resistance.

8. Visualize the outcome. Visualization has an incredibly powerful effect on the brain. It can actually rewire neural pathways in your brain to support the physical efforts you are making. Take a few minutes prior to taking action on your habit or goal to visualize yourself accomplishing it.

9. Move past failure. It takes practice to strengthen resolve and follow through on just about any endeavor. And if you tackle something hard, like diet or exercise, chances are good you will fail a few times before you are successful. Failure doesn't mean it can't be done. It might mean you started too big or didn't plan ahead. Learn from the failure and start again, correcting what you think caused you to give up. Be kind to yourself and know that building resolve is a work in progress.

10. Attempt one at a time. You may have many goals and many things you want to accomplish, but until you strengthen your resolve with one effort, don't attempt to tackle several at a time. Begin the process of strengthening your resolve with something easy. When you accomplish that, move on to another, slightly harder effort. Build up to difficult goals or tasks so that you know what to expect and how to cope with interferences or problems.

11. Practice resolve in small ways daily. Without judging your success or failure, attempt to resist small temptations during your day (ie: snacking, surfing the internet too long, gossiping). Prove to yourself that you are capable of small acts of self-discipline. These little successes will support your larger efforts at strengthening resolve.

12. Accept full responsibility for your actions. Most of what happens to us in life is a result of our own choices. Yes, there are some things that are out of our control, but even then, we can choose how to react to them. We are not victims. We have an endless array of choices that can change the quality of our lives. There is tremendous power in that.

You have the gift of a powerful brain, but it sometimes has a mind of its own! Fortunately, you also have the ability to harness that power and apply it to a fixed purpose that can enhance your life, your health, and your happiness. If you exercise your mental muscle of resolve, over time, you will develop the mental strength and confidence to accomplish whatever you set out to do.

Barrie Davenport is a personal and career coach and founder of [Live Bold and Bloom](#), a blog about bold and fearless living. She is also the creator of [Discover Your Passion: A Step-by-Step Course for Creating the Life of Your Dreams](#).

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