

**Family Living**  
**Focus**  
 by  
**Katherine**  
**French**  
 Mercer County



Here we are again at the beginning of another new year. Did you make any resolutions this year? If you did, most likely your resolution had something to do with your health; eating better, getting in shape, or quitting smoking. If you did make a resolution, good for you. But if your motivation is already beginning to fade, or you haven't quite started on those resolutions yet, here is some information that may help you get motivated.

Motivation is needed to make any change in your life, whether in your job, hobbies, relationships or your lifestyle. Nutrition author, Anne Fletcher, M.S., R.D., along with Kathleen Zelman, M.P.H., R.D., spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association, came up with some sound advice for getting, and more importantly staying motivated to make changes in your life. Here are 10 tips to help you with your motivation.

1. Choose successful role models. Find someone who has accomplished the same goal you are striving for. Learn how they dealt with setbacks, and they stayed motivated. Then apply it to your own life.
2. Get a motivational buddy. Find a friend, co-worker, or maybe your spouse that is work-

ing toward a similar change and support each other in your journey. Make use of phone calls, e-mail, and cards to share your successes and failures along the way.

3. Set realistic goals. Goals can be motivating, but they should be attainable. Setting unrealistic or extremely high goals can squelch your motivation.

4. Use humor. Try your best the majority of the time, but give yourself the freedom to laugh at yourself and your mistakes. Start anew right away; don't think one or two mistakes will ruin all of your hard work, it won't.

5. Keep a diary or log. Writing down or tracking your habits, whether it's keeping track of what you eat or your physical activity, has proven to help people stay motivated. It acknowledges that these efforts are worthy of your time and attention.

6. Individualize your approach. A diet plan or exercise regimen that works great for a friend may not work for you. It is important to do what works for you—your lifestyle, your schedule, and your preferences.

7. Get active. Exercise will not only make you feel better physically, but will boost your self-esteem and help give you a positive outlook on life. This will make



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you more successful in the changes you are trying to accomplish.

8. Have a mantra or motivational motto. Find a quote or two that inspires you. Write it down and carry it with you. Read it when you are feeling vulnerable to help strengthen your resolve.

9. Make a list of rewards. Reward yourself along the way, not just when you reach your final goal. For example, reward yourself for every five pounds of weight lost, or for exercising reg-

ularly for two weeks. Only you know what would be the best reward for yourself.

10. When frustrated, take inventory. If you make some progress, but it seems the sacrifices are not worth it anymore, make a list of all the positives and negatives of your journey. Remember how you felt before you started to make some progress toward your goal. Do you really want to go back to how you felt then? Chances are, probably not.

Motivation is the key to suc-

cess to reach your New Year's resolution, or to make any changes in your life. Realize that no one can do everything perfectly all of the time, or stay 100 percent motivated all of the time. An occasional set-back or slip-up is normal. Just pick yourself up and continue on your journey. If it was too easy, you wouldn't have as much to celebrate when you successfully reach your goal.

Source: Environmental Nutrition, December 2002.

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