



9 Tips and Tricks for Making Change Stick in 2016

Blog
Make A Change Canada
January 27, 2016
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Change is difficult for everyone. This is particularly true for Canadians when the [winter blues](#) can shrink motivation and productivity down to the size of a snowflake. Even Canadian employers are looking for ways to take the chill out of [low motivation in the workplace](#) during the winter season.

Ironically, winter is also the time when Canadians tend to set commitments for change. Fortunately, we have some time-tested tips and tricks to help you stay on track with your new year's resolutions for 2016.

[Research](#) shows that 31 percent of Canadians set a new year's resolution, yet a whopping 73 percent eventually break them. The good news is that 90 percent of Canadians are continually looking for ways to improve their overall well-being—and goal achievement is one such way.

We consulted with some of Make A Change Canada's business coaches, employment case managers, and program assistants to share their personal advice for making change stick in 2016.

1. Establish SMART goals

SMART goals are **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ttainable, **r**ealistic, and **t**imely. Keeping your goals in check with this formula provides a framework for success.

"For setting any goal or outcome, you want to make sure you're being as specific as possible and setting a deadline for each goal," says Business Coach, Chantal Orr. "For example, you wouldn't want your goal to be 'I want to lose weight.' That's not clear. Clarity is power."

Remember to take risks and set the bar high, but don't undertake the impossible. Do your research first to confirm that your goal is attainable, and don't set yourself up for disappointment.

2. Set up for success

To support any plan to change your circumstances, ensure that you set yourself up for success. From the necessary technology, to a suitable home work space, to having others to call on for support or feedback, get the necessary groundwork in place before pursuing your goals.

3. Use daily reminders

Map out exactly how and when you will work on achieving your goals with a personal calendar. Write down the tasks and subtasks required for completing each goal, pencil them into your calendar, and use this as your timeline.

"When I was in university I used to plan out every hour of every day," says Program Assistant, Marlisa Antifaeff. "This may seem too extreme for some, so perhaps it is best to roughly map out tasks for each day and allow some leeway in case your circumstances change."

4. Choose an accountability partner

Work with a partner throughout the year in a mutually supportive capacity. Meet monthly to discuss strategies, hold each other accountable, and celebrate your shared progress.

“We are all more alike than we are different,” says Employment Case Manager, Mary Alton. “I can share the best of myself with others and hope they will, in turn, offer the same.”

When you share your aspirations with others, you are more likely to persevere. It can be humiliating to commit to a goal in the presence of those you hold in respect and never take the steps to make it happen.

5. Take small steps

Commit to change one day at a time rather than one week, month, or a year. Lengthy commitments can feel daunting and delay the impetus required to take necessary steps. If you fail to reach your goal that day, do not reprimand yourself; rather, begin anew the next day.

Approach tasks in the same manner. Specifically, deal with them one at a time to avoid feeling overwhelmed. Remember to focus on accomplishments—however small.

6. Change your thinking

Feelings of doubt and limiting thoughts often accompany goal setting. Remember that in order to effect any change, you must be willing to adjust your perspective on yourself and your surroundings. Think confidently about your abilities and capacity to change, and know that, wherever you are, resources and support networks are there to help you.

7. Be passionate

Results depend on the energy you bring to fulfilling your goals. When passion is lacking, goal achievement becomes an indifferent concern.

“Whatever you set as a goal should be achievable, challenging, and have a time frame,” says Team Leader, Douglas Tardif. “The essential ingredient that makes it happen though, is passion. If you find yourself no longer wanting the goal you set, by all means, set a new goal. Don't fall into the abyss of defeat chanting the Shoulda, Coulda, Woulda mantra.”

8. Imagine success

Approach your goals with a sense of confidence and expectancy. Imagine what achieving your goals will be like. Incorporate any and all senses that apply. How will accomplishing your goal look, sound, and feel to you? Enjoy the sense of momentum when things start shifting and aligning toward the change you desire.

9. Challenge yourself

Reach just beyond your current knowledge and skills. Don't allow others to impose their conception of what you are or are not capable of. Show yourself—and your network of friends, family, and acquaintances—that you can do it!

“I recently heard from a student in our [Web Essentials/Web Advanced](#) program that her friends and family were astounded when she told them she was considering completing this training,” says Executive Director, Anne-Marie Edgar. “Instead of giving up, the student saw this as an opportunity to challenge herself. Today, I am pleased to say she is excelling in the program and is well on her way to reinstating herself in the labour market.”

Discover how Make A Change Canada's programs can help you stand out in today's labour market by registering for our upcoming [Information Session](#).

KNOW MORE! Make A Change Canada Information Session

with Executive Director Anne-Marie Edgar, Team Leader Douglas Tardif, and Employment Case Manager Mary Alton

Thursday, March 3 at 11:00 a.m. Pacific (2:00 p.m. Eastern)

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