

WHY
YOU FAILED
YOUR
NEW YEAR'S
RESOLUTION.
AGAIN.

*AND HOW TO
SUCCEED
NEXT YEAR.*



a BiteGeist by

MEHA MEHROTRA
PARANSHI ZAVERI
UTKARSH SINGH
PRAKASH SHARMA

one.

**DECEMBER
BLUES,**
***JANUARY
HIGHS.***

Jeewan flashback...

**Even December is ending.
Another year,
gone by.**

**You haven't gone to the gym,
Cut down on sugar,
Read those 12 books
that YouTuber told you to
Or saved up enough for
the emergency fund.**

**BUT HEY.
WHAT'S WITH ALL
THE LOSER TALK?**

**Dump the blues.
The New Year is coming!
This is going to be your year.
This is the year you become
a changed person.**

**THIS IS THE FRESH
START YOU'VE BEEN
WAITING FOR.**



30 .12 .20XX

1001 Stories conducted a multi-modal study to get a deeper understanding of people's relationships with new resolutions.

SURVEY OF
N= 81
AGES 20-68
NRI +
INDIANS

IDI's OF
N= 13
AGES 22-47
NRI +
INDIANS

LONGITUDINAL STUDY:
6 PARTICIPANTS
keeping logs of
success & failure
OVER 3 YEARS
AGES 28-45
ALL INDIA

MOST
RESOLUTIONS
REVOLVED
AROUND:



HEALTH

Picking up a new habit



LEARNING

Self-Improvement



HEALTH

Quitting a Bad Habit



MONEY RELATED



jayega.

IT WASN'T ENOUGH TO MAKE A RESOLUTION.
YOU PROBABLY SPENT MONEY ON IT, TOO.

If we had to make a
prediction, assuming your
goal was around fitness,

You were
comfortable
spending around
5-6% of your
monthly salary.

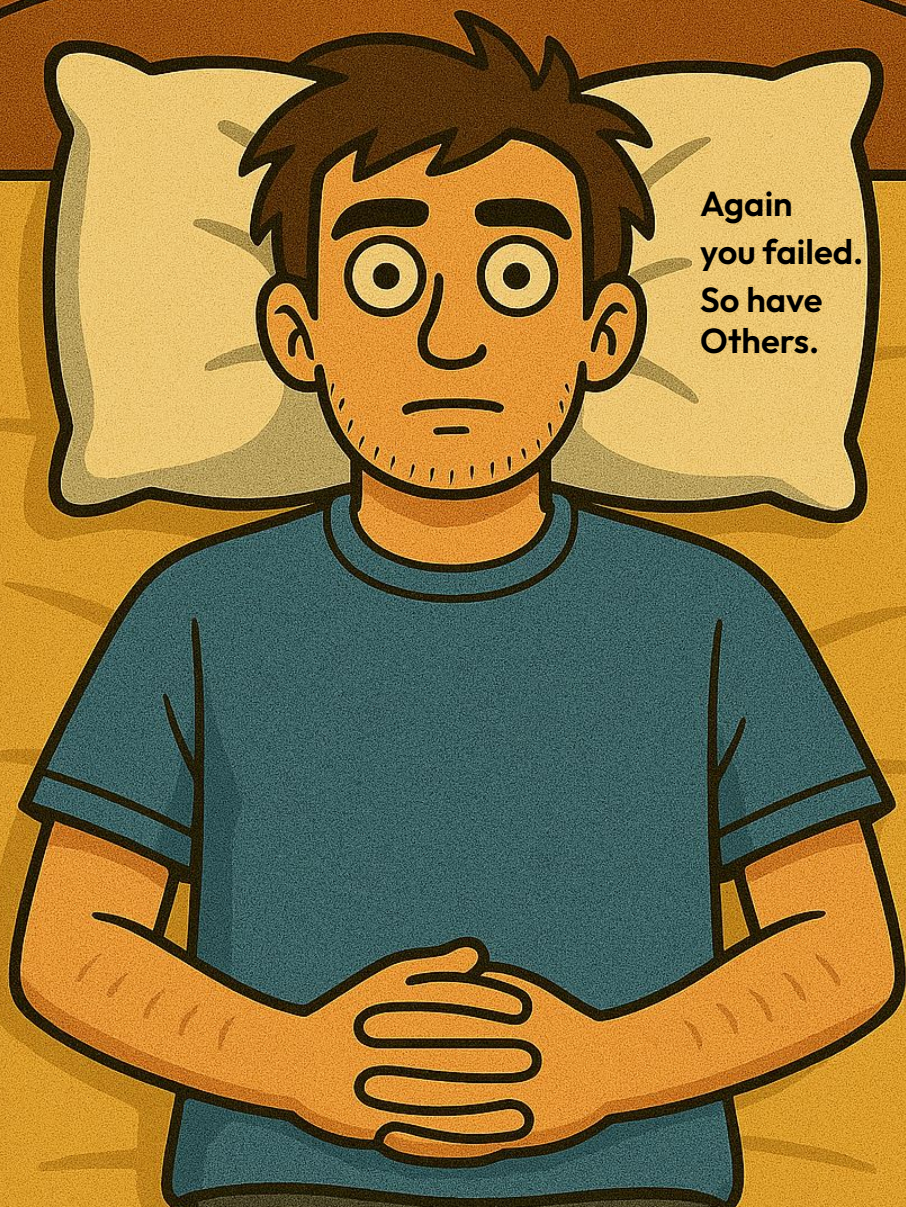
You felt pumped.
Almost escaped the
QUITTER'S DAY, the
second weekend of the
new year, when the
resolve starts to fail for
most. So far so good.

And then, February
arrived. Life began
coming in the way.

THE
MOTIVATION
FELT STALE...
THE ACTIVITY
MUNDANE.

IT TOOK ONE
OUTING WITH
FRIENDS. THE
RESOLUTION
FELT LIKE A
HOUSE OF
CARDS.

DD. 02 .20XY



New year, new me?
Maybe Next year.

two.

**FEW FAILURES ARE
HARD TO ESCAPE.**

**ESPECIALLY,
WHEN TRIGGERED
BY
*CONTEXT SHIFTS.***

Prasad

You've decided to cut carbs, fill yourself with protein, eat the right amount of fiber. You avoid Gluten, too. You're happy with your progress. It is the first time you've stuck with your resolution.



CONTEXT SHIFT #1: THE CHOLE BHATURE EFFECT

The expectations and norms that keep an individual within a collective, can be stronger than the individual's need for self improvement in collectivistic cultures.

But then comes Sunday. Guests are over. Your mother is famous for her Chole Bhature. Requests were made. Mother has given in. You, post protest, had your fill, as well.



YOU COULD NOT BE A SPOILSPORT. YOU HAD TO SHARE THE TABLE, APPRECIATE YOUR MOTHER'S FOOD.

ka sugar count nahi hota

Chole Bhature Effect

"I HAVE TO EAT A LOT
OF JUNK FOOD..

BECAUSE EVERYONE ELSE AT
WORK IS SO STRESSED.

THEY ARE REALLY STRESSED
SO THEY WANT TO HANGOUT
AFTER WORK..

WE GET 10 MINUTE
BREAKS DURING WORK
AND WE GO AND HAVE SOMETHING.

THAT PLACE ONLY HAS
SAMOSA AND CAKE.

YOU HAVE TO EAT EITHER
CAKE OR SAMOSA.
IT'S AN EITHER/OR.

- VV, Female, 27

Ghar ke

You're a young migrant couple from Meerut living in Mumbai. Your gym routine & healthy meal prepping are in sync with your 9-5 job.

Life is on track.



You go home for Makar Sankranti. The comfort of ghee-rich home food, the pani-puri flavour exclusive to your city, sweets from *your* halwai are a call to your very identity, life as it was, growing up.

CONTEXT SHIFT #2: THE GHAR-WAPSI EFFECT

Habits built in adopted environments break down when one goes back to their original contexts - triggering an earlier identity.

THIS IS HOME.
IT CAN'T BE
BAD.



WHAT IS
RESOLVED IN
MUMBAI,
STAYS IN MUMBAI.
NEW HABITS &
ROUTINES TAKE A
BACKSEAT IN
MEERUT.



The person you used to be in your older environment tends to switch chairs with who you are in your work / study city.



Ghar - Wapsi Effect

"WE GO TO GOA
[HOMETOWN] **QUITE OFTEN.**

AND BECAUSE WE ARE HOME
AND EVERYONE IS PAMPERING
US. MY IN-LAWS ARE VERY GOOD.
I DON'T HAVE TO COOK A LOT
OR DO WORK AT HOME.
WE GET A LITTLE LAZY
DRINK IN THE HOUSE,
GO OUT AND EAT...

IT'S OK.

ONCE WE'RE BACK IN PUNE,
WE ARE VERY STRICT...

**I WANNA STICK TO
MY RESOLUTION
EVEN WHEN I AM IN GOA."**

PD, Female, 34

Life has recently thrown a lot at you. The new job with higher package comes with longer hours. You've been trying to start creating content on social media. Your sister's getting engaged. There's a lot to do.

CONTEXTSHIFT #3: THE FAST-TRAIN EFFECT

Picking new habits and goals without slowing down and making space for them in current life often causes failure.

The failure came as an outcome of the resolution not finding time in your life. A new resolution requires careful consideration of *HOW IT FITS* in your life, without disrupting other facets.

Saans

aise hi
phooli
Dohiti hai,

You resolved to read new books in genres you had not explored before. You stuck with the resolution for a couple weeks though sheer commitment.

Tum Cardio
bhi
karwa do.

DOING IT OFTEN
NEEDS SOME
SLOWING
DOWN, ELSE, THE
MOMENTUM OF
YOUR OWN
LIFE WILL MAKE
YOU TRIP.

Fast - Train Effect

"TAKE UP YOUR CRAZY
WEIGHTLOSS JOURNEY
WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE
TOO MUCH GOING ON.

IN DIFFICULT TIMES
YOUR BODY JUST
NEEDS TO SURVIVE.

IF SOMETHING IS
HAPPENING IN YOUR FAMILY
AND IT'S AFFECTING YOU,
IT WON'T BE POSSIBLE."

DT, Female, 39

While creating 3 -4 months long resolution plans, Individuals often fail to account for daily Micro-variations.

High daily variability in routines, causes the resolution to be difficult to integrate in daily life. This is especially true in the initial phases.

CONTEXTSHIFT #4: THE DAILY-GOOGLY

Every day comes with its own sets of challenges. Higher the variability in daily life, greater the likelihood of falling off the journey.

Eg. Jobs heavy on field work, living in a city with unpredictable traffic, long hours expected in office throw a spanner in the plans made.

THE DAILY-GOOGLY HAD A LARGE EFFECT ON HOW THE RESPONDENTS FELT ABOUT THEMSELVES IN THE INITIAL PHASES OF THEIR RESOLUTIONS.

HIGHLY FREQUENT DAILY GOOGLY CAUSED RESOLUTION RELATED ACTIVITIES TO DROP QUICKLY.

The Daily Googly

"WHEN I'M FREE, AND WHEN
I'M FOCUSED ON THE
RESOLUTION, THEN IT'LL
WORK

BUT I CAN'T DO IT IF I DONT
HAVE THE MENTAL SPACE FOR IT...
I KIND OF THINK MY DAY IS NOT
VERY STRUCTURED, SO FOR ME
TO INSERT A HABIT IT GETS
DIFFICULT.

WHENEVER I HAD TIME TO DO
RUNNING, THEN IT WOULD WORK"

RK, Male, 26

When we buy a new shoe, cut our hair differently, wear a new makeup, or have to attend a meeting of large people - we often overestimate how much others notice us.



This is the Spotlight effect. One of the reasons this happens, is because we're aware of changes in ourselves much more than others .

CONTEXT SHIFT #5: RESOLVER'S BLINDSPOT

The resolution taker gets so focused on the fact that they are changing, that they become blind to the fact that the world is constantly changing too.



This mental shift comes with a pitfall.

We end up paying so much attention to our actions, and the resolution itself - that we end up ignoring the fact that our life and the world is changing too.



IF NOT ACCOUNTED FOR LONG ENOUGH, RESOLUTIONS BECOME INCOMPATIBLE WITH LIFE, AND YOU DROP OFF, BLINDSIDED BY THE CHANGE.

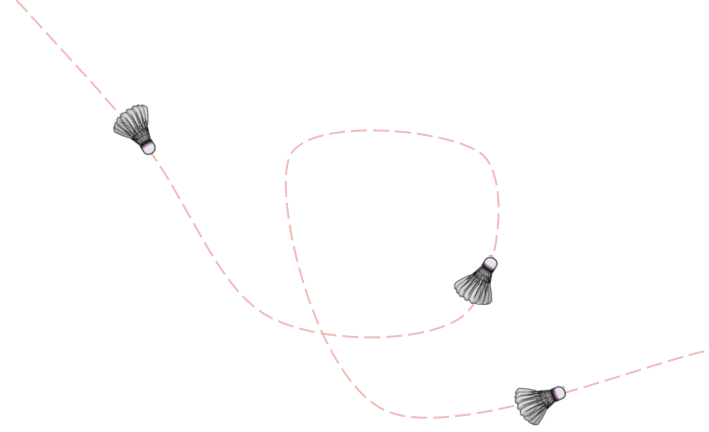
Resolver's Blindspot

"I SORT OF HAD A
PLAN, BUT IT WAS NOT
A PRACTICAL PLAN. I
THOUGHT IF I'M GONNA
TRAVEL,
I CAN READ. BUT WHAT
HAPPENED WAS THAT I
WOULD FALL ASLEEP.
SO IT USED TO BE LIKE
THERE WOULD BE
4-5 DAYS WHERE I
USED TO READ A
LOT, THEN I WOULD
TAKE A BREAK, THEN
START AGAIN."

RK, Male, 26

three.

**WHAT DID
THOSE WHO
SUCCEEDED
DO?**



1.

THEY STARTED

~~SIMPLE~~

SIMPLER

~~SMALL~~

SMALLER

"I WAS ABLE TO MAKE
READING WORK, BECAUSE I
CHOSE THE RIGHT BOOK, THE
SIMPLEST BOOK LIKE
SHANTANU NAIDU KA BOOK

THE BOOK IS 300 PAGES SO I
BREAK IT UP INTO 300/30.
10 PAGES EVERYDAY IN 30
DAYS. HARDLY WOHI 30
MINUTES LETA HAI."

PD, Female, 34

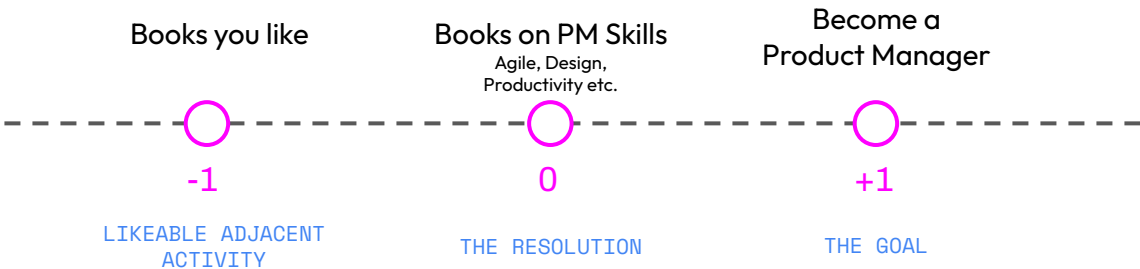
When people think ‘simple’ they often don’t account for their own starting point. When someone’s goal is to become a product manager, and that requires a lot of reading, starting out ‘simple’ by reading 10 pages a day won’t help – *especially* when you aren’t an avid reader.

‘Simple,’ here, is to start with reading books you like.

FIGURE
OUT YOUR
SIMPLER.

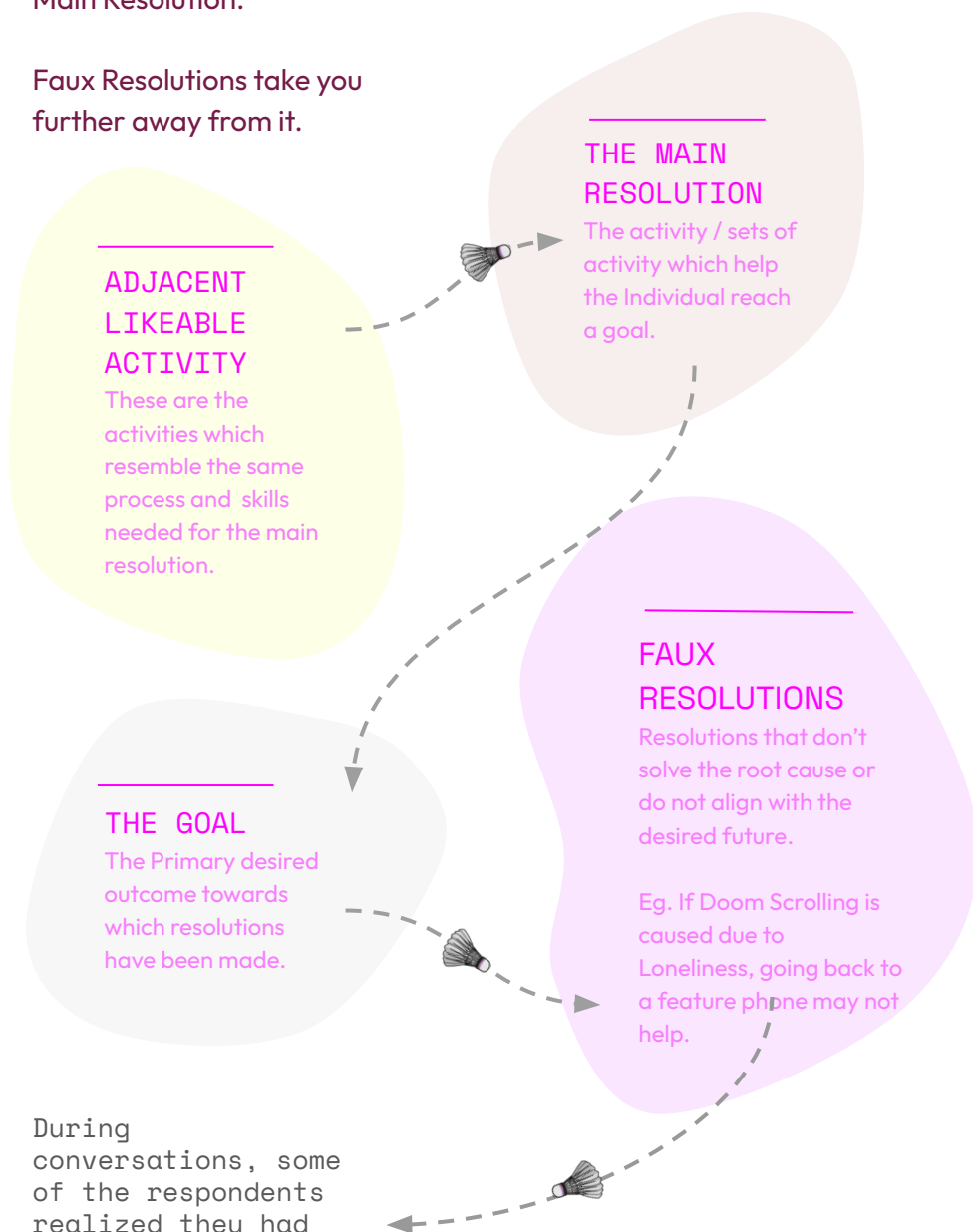
Important To Note :

Theory of Optimal Arousal suggests simplifying activities that you already find easy / enjoyable might make them boring in the long run. Simplification works when the challenge feels just about right, neither too difficult nor too easy.



Adjacent Likeable Activities help train Individuals prepare for the Main Resolution.

Faux Resolutions take you further away from it.



During conversations, some of the respondents realized they had picked up a faux resolution. In such cases, consulting an expert often helped.

"PEOPLE LOSE MOTIVATION
BECAUSE THEY SET
UNREALISTIC
STANDARDS

AND
OVERWHELM
THEMSELVES

WITH ALL THE TASKS AT
ONCE.

THE TASKS WHICH THEY HAVE
NEVER DONE IN THEIR LIFE
ARE EXPECTED TO BE
PERFORMED AT
PERFECT TIME AND
FREQUENCY.

THAT'S A RECIPE FOR
A DISASTER."



Rachit Bir,
Founder
[Bira Fitness](#)

2.

MADE

MEASUREABLE

YET

FLEXIBLE
GOALS

"MY RESOLUTION IS TO BE
ACTIVE FOR ONE HOUR
EVERYDAY...

BUT IT'S NOT MY TARGET TO
HIT ONE HOUR EVERYDAY. IF I
DO THAT I MAKE IT TERRIBLY
HARD FOR MYSELF. BUT NOW
I'VE BECOME MORE OF A AAS
MISS YOU GAYA, KAL 2 GHANTA
KAR LENGE."

SS, Male, 47



“WHEN A
MEASURE
BECOMES
A TARGET,
IT CEASES TO BE
A GOOD
MEASURE.”

- **GOODHART'S
LAW**

2A. MEASURABLE GOALS

Research show that it is important to have measurable goals.

Respondents who succeeded had got their basics right – making the goal measurable.

These goals become a source of motivation, & allows one to track progress.

MEASURABLE

A goal that is measurable is off to a better start than a goal that isn't – for domains where measurability is crucial (e.g., fitness, skill building).

"I want to get fit."

IMMEASURABLE
GOAL

"I want to cycle 12km
every week...
[50 km a month]"

MN, Male, 41

MEASURABLE
GOAL

2B.

MEASURABLE + FLEXIBLE GOALS.

+FLEXIBLE

A goal that is measurable *and* flexible, allows one to stick to their resolution better; it provides some 'wiggle room' which prevents any occasional failure from paralyzing future attempts towards the resolution.

"If I miss one week, I'll just add a few kilometres in the next week."



MEASURABLE
+
FLEXIBLE GOAL

When respondents introduced the element of flexibility in their goals, they could build a healthier relationship with their resolution.

Flexibility in one's measurable goal allows one to feel as if they 'still have time,' even if they haven't accomplished their goal for particular day; they can still achieve their larger goal.

"IF I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'M RUNNING OUT OF TIME, I'M MORE LIKELY TO FACE MY 'FAILURE' AND ATTEMPT AGAIN..."

DB, Male, 29

3.
FOUND TIME TO
SLOW DOWN
AND
REFLECT

"I USUALLY TAKE A 3 DAY
VACATION, [IN THE SAME CITY]
TO THINK ABOUT MY PAST
YEAR AND WHAT DO I REALLY
WANT FROM THE NEXT
YEAR..."

VV, Female, 27

When individuals took the time to reflect on their past year & their experiences related to the resolution, it added more purpose, intent, ability to realistically make it a part of their lives.

"USUALLY, I HAVE WORK GOING ON TILL DECEMBER... I MADE MY RESOLUTION IN JANUARY BECAUSE THAT'S WHEN I GOT TIME TO SIT & THINK TILL NOW, IT'S GOING GOOD. "

MN, Male, 41

Respondents also mentioned having circumstances that allowed them the mindspace to slow down – avoiding the *Fast Train effect*.

"AFTER MY MOTHER CAME BACK FROM THE ICU, I COULD THINK ABOUT MY GOAL... BEFORE THAT, EVEN IF I TRIED, I COULD NOT LOSE THE WEIGHT."

DT, Female, 39

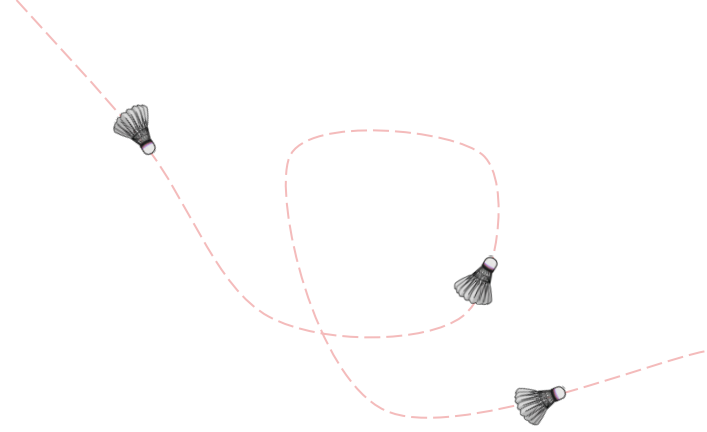
Post COVID work from home options allowed for the freedom to gain more control over their own life. Having a less varied day helped respondents avoid *Daily Googly*. Only stronger context shifts could deter them.

"AFTER COVID, I GOT A PROMOTION, AND NOW GO TO OFFICE ONLY FOR AN HOUR A DAY. IT HAS HELPED ME STAY CONSISTENT. GOING BACK TO GOA MAKES ME LAPSE"

PD, Female, 34

four.

**PRINCIPLES
THAT
WORK.**



In multiple projects that spanned healthcare, Insurance, and public health, 1001 Stories observed that helping people move towards a new identity created stronger drive for action than simple motivations for a “better life”.

PRINCIPLE #1:
LIFEPHASE RESOLUTIONS
>>>>>
LIFESTYLE RESOLUTION

They wanted to be seen as “Ideal Fathers”, and were also most likely to succeed at quitting in this phase.

These individuals had tried quitting multiple times earlier but their previous identity’s mental models were more susceptible to failure.

For example, while working on a project around developing a new nicotine replacement product (NRT) for Gutka Chewers, it was found that they were most likely to try the NRT product after they had a girl-child.

**DESIRING
A NEW IDENTITY
TRIGGERS
CHANGE.
BUILDING IT
TOWARDS NEW
LIFE-PHASE
CONSOLIDATES
IT.**

Lifephase Resolutions

>>>>>

Lifestyle Resolutions

"WE HAVE BEEN
TRYING FOR A FAMILY
FOR LAST ONE YEAR.

IT HAS BEEN A LONG AND
EXHAUSTING JOURNEY WITH NO
RESULTS SO FAR.

THAT DREAM KEEPS ME
GOING TO KEEP IMPROVING
MY BODY, MIND AND SPIRIT
SO THAT I AM READY FOR
IT.

- PD, Female, 34

”PEOPLE
EXPECT
SUCCESS
WITH JUST
ONE
ATTEMPT.

Dharmendra D,
Fitness Expert,
[Running Coach](#)

In 2020, 1001 Stories ran a longitudinal observation of 30 individuals who wanted to be fitter. They were given just one instruction -

To make every day “non-zero”.

PRINCIPLE #2: FAIL THRICE

It was observed that at each stage of lapsing, **roughly 30% people dropped off.**

By the end of the programme, the people who learnt through failing each time, and tried again, were the ones who finally transformed into people who could run marathons / lost weight and kept it off.

For example, if the goal was to get fitter, letting no day go without doing something towards the activity - be it just doing 10 pushups, or a kilometer of walking.

FACING
FAILURE IS
INHERENT
TO STARTING
ANEW.

Expect Failure

"PEOPLE EXPECT SUCCESS
WITH JUST ONE ATTEMPT.

MORE THAN 75%
OF MY SUCCESSFUL CLIENTS
DO NOT SUCCEED IN THEIR
FIRST ATTEMPT.

**IT TAKES MORE
THAN ONE EFFORT.**

MOST PEOPLE REACH
THEIR FITNESS GOALS
THROUGH
PERSISTENCE. THEY
DON'T GET
DISPIRITED WHEN
THEY MISS
INTERMEDIATE
ONES."



Dharmendra D,
Fitness Expert,
[Running Coach](#)

Fail Thrice

"JUST REMEMBER TO
GET BACK ON THE
WAGON EACH TIME YOU
FALL OFF, AND YOU
WILL FALL OFF."

AFTER GETTING
STARTED,
"RESTORE"
IS PROBABLY
THE MOST
IMPORTANT
ASPECT OF
KEEPING YOUR
RESOLUTION
ALIVE!"



Shalini Raghunathan,
Co-Founder,
[3 Big Things](#)

One is often bombarded with 3-month transformation clips, how a superstar worked on their body and lost weight in record time for a new role, and how financial freedom was achieved by investing in the right stocks in a very short amount of time.



These narratives, while giving individuals the dream of quick outcomes- miss out on the degree of effort, resource, and precision needed to achieve it.

PRINCIPLE #3: EIGENZEIT

Eigenzeit is a German concept that highlights “the time inherent to a process”.

Each kind of resolution requires its own time, and the need to rush it often only adds to extra stress, causing lapses.

THERE IS AN
INHERENT
TIME NEEDED
FOR BUILDING
A HEALTHY
RELATIONSHIP
WITH YOUR
RESOLUTION.

five.

**TRADITIONS IN
INDIA
HAD
RITUALISED
THESE
LEARNINGS.**

TAKING A SANKALPA.

The Sanskrit '*Sankalpa*' is a combination of two words:

Sama meaning
"Together" / "Whole"

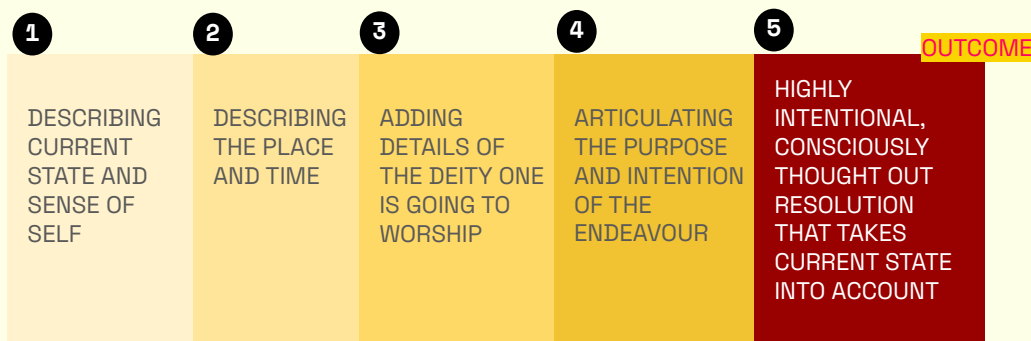
Kalpa meaning
"Imagination / Vow"

Sankalp is a ritual performed before starting a fast, taking up an oath, or performing penance.

"For the magic ritual to be effective, it must involve Body, Speech and Mind: the primary modes in which awareness engages and expresses.

These three are united by a singular intention. The ritual act may be meaningless, but the very fact that one articulates the intention in action, has an effect."

How Tantrik Ritual Works
A Commentary on
10th Century Text,
Tantraloka, Abhinavagupta



During this ritual, one articulates their intention, its duration, and the purpose for it, in minute details after articulating their identity, in their Geo-Spatial Context.

Sankalpa taking is still practised in Yogic and Tantric Practises.



CELEBRATING AKSHAYA TRITIYA

Akshaya Tritiya is a highly auspicious Hindu and Jain festival celebrated in India, usually falling in April or May.

The word 'Akshaya' means 'never diminishing', symbolizing eternal prosperity, good fortune and success.

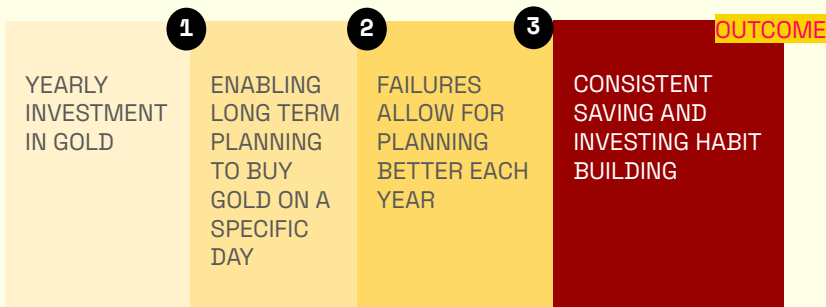
Gold up 19% from last Akshaya Tritiya

Niyati Parikh / TNN / Updated: May 10, 2024, 10:35 IST

Gold prices surged to Rs 73,900/10g, yielding 19% returns from last year's Akshaya Tritiya. The Jeweller Association projects 225kg gold sales in Gujarat, with consumers likely to benefit from high prices and geopolitical tensions.



AHMEDABAD: (TNN) Gold prices on the festive day of Akshaya Tritiya saw a significant rise. As gold prices settled low at Rs 73,900 per 10 grams, the market saw a sharp increase in demand. The day is considered auspicious for buying gold, and the prices are expected to remain high for some time.



It is believed that any good deed or investment made on this day, especially buying gold, starting new ventures, or performing charitable acts will bring lasting benefits. Akshaya Tritiya is a reminder to save and invest regularly.

India often sees spikes in Gold investments on this day, along with the day of *Dhanteras* during the latter half of the year. It's a yearly SIP ritual woven into the festival season so that earnings of the year can be invested for tomorrow.



The Indian system of different festivals, their purpose and the rituals associated with them have been strong triggers to different resolutions that Indians take up.

Be it making investments on Akshaya Tritiya and Dhanteras, or developing relationship with your tools, buy new ones to learn and use on Vishwakarma Pooja.



Or be it calling every relative up on Holi, practising fasting during the Navratri, or picking a book up after Saraswati Puja.

There are multiple occasions to make new attempts, and bring change in life.

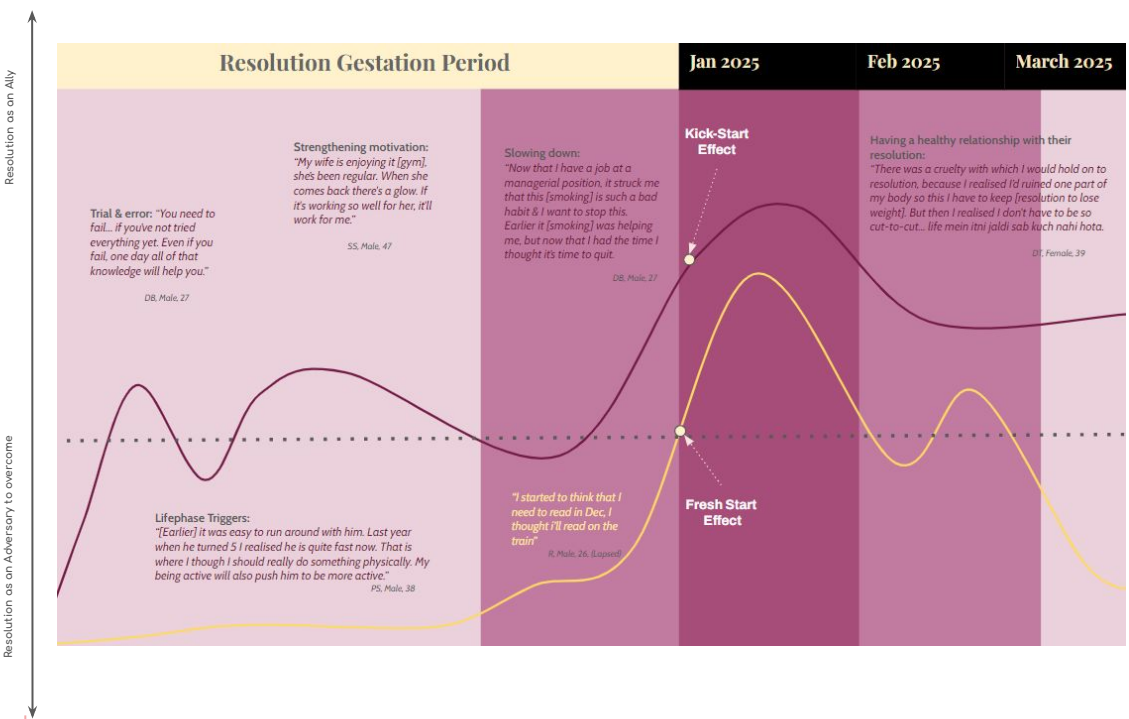
And then when one feels ready, to finally take the Sankalpa towards a goal.

six.

**FROM FAILURE
TO
SUCCESS.**

1. RESOLUTION RELATIONSHIP GRAPH

*Qualitative aggregation of experiences with their resolution during deep Context Interviews. Respondents set their resolution in January, and were interviewed in March 2025. (n=12). Findings were verified with past studies.



1001 Stories found that the **ACTIVITIES THAT TOOK PLACE BEFORE THE NEW YEAR ITSELF WERE A BETTER PREDICTOR OF INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS.**

.....	Intention to Action Cut-off line As the relationship line crosses the cutoff, intentions starts translating to action
—————	The Veteran's Resolution relationship curve
—————	Newbie's Resolution relationship curve
↔	Relationship with the Resolution

Individuals who worked on improving their relationship with their resolution during the gestation period, via failing & learning, were able to remain more consistent by forecasting periods of failure.



RESOLUTION GESTATION

The pre-resolution period during which Individuals can work on improving their relationship with the resolution before kick-starting the resolution.



FRESH START EFFECT

A phenomenon where individuals are more motivated to set and pursue goals, especially after significant temporal landmarks like the start of a new year, month, or week. Its cause is often explained as people “getting over” their past failures.

KICK - START EFFECT

Discovered by 1001 Stories, is an evolution of the Fresh-Start effect wherein the learning from the past failures have been incorporated into the Individual's abilities after a prolonged gestation period of the resolution. It gives individuals an edge over those who decide to 'start-fresh'.

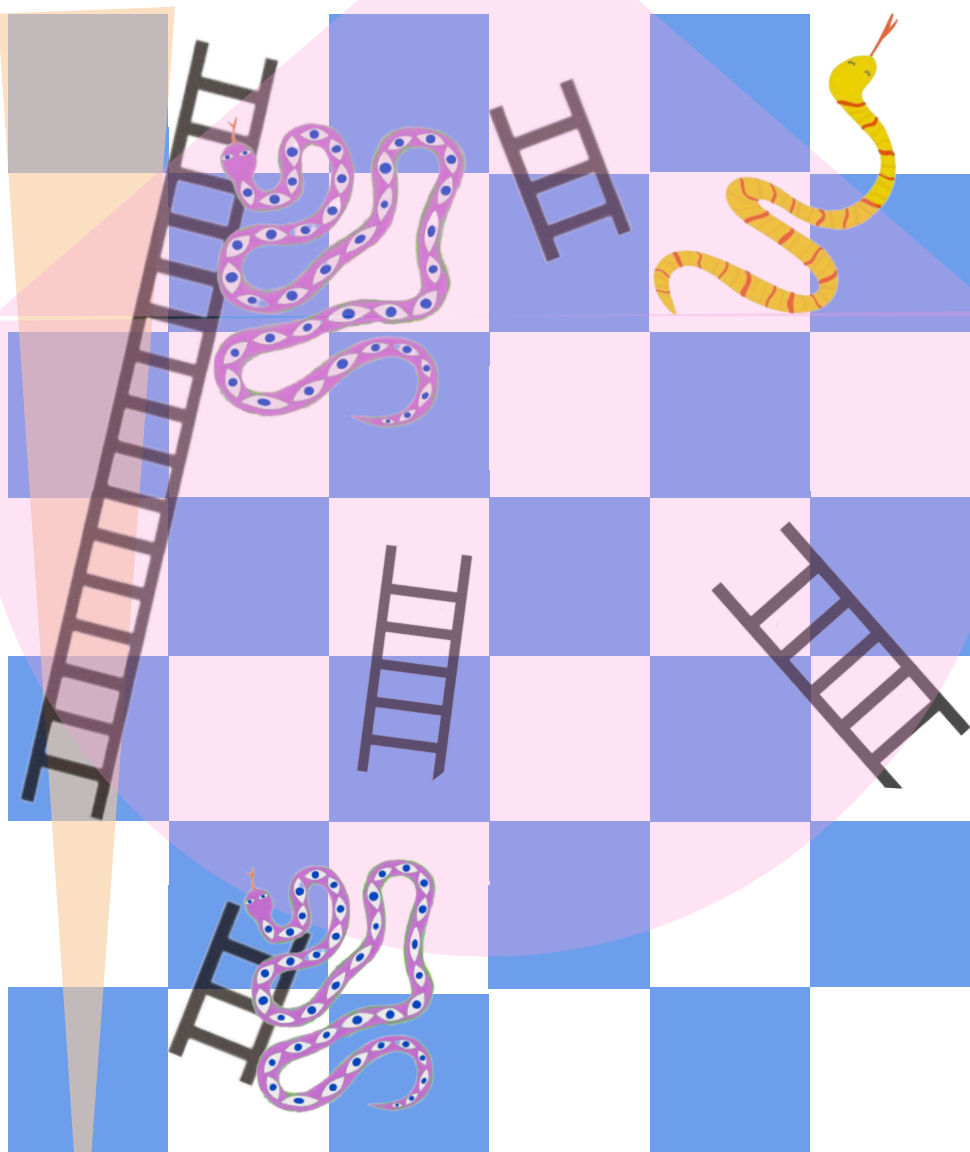


2. THE RESOLVER'S PERSPECTIVE BOARD.



Player 2 – Veteran

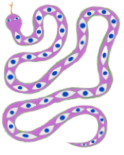
Improving relationship with resolution. The more you roll the dice, the stronger your relationship.



Player 1 – Newbie

HOW TO READ IT

Legend



Lapses: anything that causes a setback. Eg. Chhole Bhature effect, Daily Googly.



Dice: the number of times you roll the dice, represents attempts at keeping up the resolutions; the number of times you showed up.



Triggers: anything that pushes you to building a better relationship with your resolution. E.g., Life Phase shifts



Relationship Progress Bar: The lines shows your strengthening relationship with the resolution. With increasing number of rolls, the bar goes up.

Player 1 – Newbie

- Wants to keep rolling 5s & 6s. Gives up if that doesn't happen.
- Has a narrow view on their resolution – linear journey.
- Usually sees ladders, does not expect snakes. If snake is encountered, may not continue rolling the dice as they don't expect a ladder in the future.
- Has the *100 end* in mind always. Thinks that the goal of rolling the dice is achieving a measure.

Player 2 – Veteran

- Accepts the possibility that 1s, 2s, 3s can result from a roll. Continues rolling nonetheless.
- Has developed a broader view on their resolution – non-linear journey.
- Sees both snakes & ladders. Expects snakes, but knows how to deal with them. Falls, but continues rolling.
- Thinks that the goal of rolling the dice is building a healthy relationship with the resolution.

Has lower relationship points with the resolution.

Has higher relationship points with the resolution.

The veteran is the same person as the newbie.
It's just that they continued rolling the dice.

WHY YOU FAILED YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION. AGAIN.

*AND HOW TO
SUCCEED
NEXT YEAR.*

Meha Mehrotra
Paranshi Zaveri
Utkarsh Singh
Prakash Sharma

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